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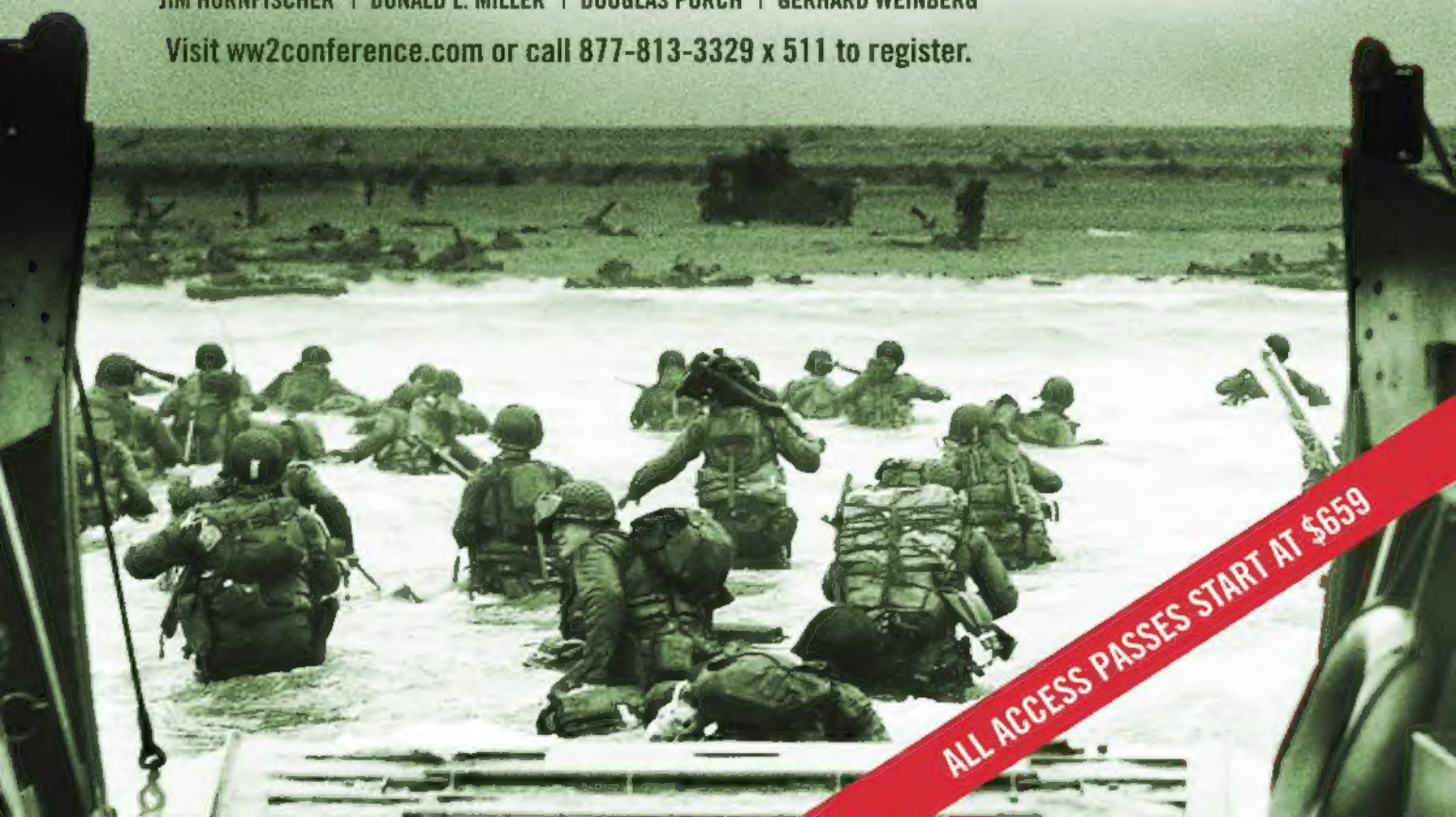

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WWII
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COVER SHOT: *Don Bryan, shown in front of his P-51D Mustang fighter* Little One III, *spotted his first German Arado Blitz jet bomber in December 1944. After that, he spent a good number of hours obsessing over how to take one down. The opportunity to test what he learned arrived in March 1945.* US ARMY

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Dads in Uniform

THE ONLY UNIFORM MY DAD WORE DURING WORLD WAR II was one of those pint-size army uniforms that soldiers used to buy for their sons and kid brothers. His came from an older brother, and there's a photo of him wearing it in front of his house. Sadly, no one seems to be able to locate that print right now or you'd be looking at it here.

It was several years ago that I first saw that photo, when it was handed to me along with a letter that Dad's brother Al had written to him from the Pacific. Uncle Al offered his hard-earned assessment that the front was no place to be and threw in some advice: learn to type so, with any luck, if you get drafted, they'll make you a clerk far away from the fighting. Dad already had taken typing classes, so he was set, but the war ended before he reached draft age.

Uncle Sam did come for him a few years later, during the Korean War. Dad was put on a ship and sent to the Pacific—and was seasick the entire way. Uncle Al's advice proved wise, and the army needed Dad's typing ability most of all—and needed it in Japan, far from the front. "Radar O'Reilly" was how he described himself to me. When Dad died a handful of years ago, my brothers and I were going through his stuff and found an album filled with wartime photos of him in Japan. None of us had ever heard about it, let alone seen it. Now he was gone and not a note remained to explain a thing.

John Stanchak, author of the article "A Sailor's Adventure of a Lifetime" in this issue, was luckier than my brothers and me. Like our dad, his dad came home with piles of photos, but John knows what his are. They show his dad launching a new navy destroyer, sailing on it into the Pacific, fighting the Japanese, witnessing the war-ending surrender—and stopping often along the way for drinks! We're all lucky in this case: we get to see a selection of those WWII images here, along with John's research and recollections.

So far, the dad stories I'm telling are positive. But I'm talking about war, so the news can't always be good. In another father-related article in this issue, "Losing Dad," our book and media reviews editor, Allyson Patton, writes about what it was like to be a kid and have your dad go off to war and not come back. Allyson talked with some of these war orphans. They tell us about how they struggled to get to know their lost dads and how piecing together their dads' stories and meeting other war orphans helped.

Although I wish I had had John Stanchak's luck with my dad's pictures and the stories behind them, I'm really just grateful Dad survived. When his service term was up, Uncle Sam sent him home. By that time Dad was a streetwise, well-connected clerk with pockets full of favors to cash in. He wasn't about to take another seasick voyage across the rolling Pacific. In classic Radar O'Reilly fashion, he finagled his way onto a plane.

Carl Zebrowski
Editor, *America in WWII*

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V-MAIL

FDR's FLIGHT TO BRAZIL

I READ THE STORY "The President Gets His Wings" [by David A. Norris, June 2014] with great interest. I was reading one of my uncle's letters home, in which he said he was readying for an inspection. He also mentioned he hadn't been able to tell anyone about his previous inspection, because it was by the president. My uncle was stationed in Natal, Brazil, and my first thought was, "Why would the president be in Brazil inspecting naval aviation squadron VP-74?" [The V designates fixed-wing aircraft and the P stands for patrol.]

With further research I learned that President Roosevelt made a stop in Natal on his return trip from Casablanca [by airplane in January 1943]. During the visit, Roosevelt and Brazilian President Getúlio Vargas inspected VP-74. Following the inspection, Roosevelt met with the officers of the squadron, and they discussed its role in the war.

To this day Roosevelt's stopover remains a big event in Brazil. In 2013, on the 70th anniversary of the visit, the people of Natal had men dressed as Roosevelt and Vargas ride in a restored American jeep along the route taken by the president in 1943.

The men of VP-74 considered it a great honor to have been inspected by President Roosevelt. To the best of my knowledge, only two squadron members who were part of that inspection are still living.

BILL DEARMOND
Abilene, Kansas

HOME-FRONT HISTORY FAN

I WAS AN EARLY SUBSCRIBER to your magazine and have never stopped. I have kept all the issues in binders and am teaching my grandkids and great-grandkids about World War II with these as visual aids.

US NAVY

FDR's 1943 visit to Brazil was a big deal. Seventy years later, Brazilians deemed it worthy of an anniversary celebration.

In the beginning I was skeptical of your premise, but was interested in where it would go. You have matured into an exceptionally nice read. The articles have expanded and the photos are excellent.

I will advise you to stay connected to original themes and not become another war magazine concentrating on anniversaries of battles, etc. I can read battle statistics in other periodicals. Keep it friendly, keep it diverse, and stick to theme—the civilian world during World War II. Thank you for all your work.

HORACE WYNN
received via e-mail

Editor's Note: *While the American civilian in World War II is a key part of our focus,* America in WWII *is really about three things: the war, the home front, and the people—as we say in the tagline beneath our logo. We believe in telling the stories of history with a focus on the people who* lived *the history, at the front and on the home front. Thank you, Mr. Wynn, for liking what we're doing.*

A REVELATION ABOUT D-DAY

MY FATHER DIDN'T TALK about World War II. I suspect that he felt he hadn't done his part. He served in the US Merchant Marine from 1942 to November 1945 as a chief radio operator aboard ships delivering supplies on long runs from port to port. Although he had a few escapades with Japanese airplanes when he rode on tankers, he wasn't involved in hand-to-hand combat, and he honored those who were.

When I was in school in the fifties and early sixties, our history classes didn't get into World War II as much as other wars fought by our country. We usually ended the school year just as the Second World War arrived in our textbooks. However, after discovering 1,000 pages of typed letters my father sent my mother (1941–1945), I've gotten curious. And the article in the June issue by Andrew A. Wiest ("The First Battle of World War III") intrigued me. I had always thought that the single reason we invaded on D-Day was to subdue the Germans, which of course is only one of the motivations.

After reading Wiest's article, I began to think of the war in a much more political way. The machinations of Josef Stalin and the forward thinking of Winston Churchill were so clear to me as I read. And now I understand the Cold War a lot better, my grandparents and older neighbors watching whatever those Russians were up to.

I thank you for enriching my thinking, for putting me back in that time to actually "see" what was going on. And I especially appreciate the scholarly though very readable piece by Dr. Wiest, which has opened my eyes a little further.

JANE BARTOW
blogger at worldwarIIdaughters.org
Tucson, Arizona

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PINUP

Frances Gifford

Frances Gifford was a teenager who had her act together. With dreams of becoming a lawyer, the native of Long Beach, California, applied to the UCLA School of Law. Then one day a friend took her to the studios of Samuel Goldwyn Productions. There she met a talent agent and soon signed a movie contract. Her legal career was over before it began.

Gifford began her Hollywood run in several uncredited roles before, at age 20, she landed what would become her signature role: Nyoka, the scantily clad heroine of 1941's *Jungle Girl* and its 1942 sequel, *Perils of Nyoka*. She revisited the jungle in 1943's *Tarzan Triumphs*, playing a beautiful princess opposite Johnny Weismuller's ape man in a lost civilization taken over by Nazis. Then she signed with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (not connected with Samuel Goldwyn) and appeared in a few more films in the following years.

In 1948 Gifford nearly died in a car accident, and her health and career began to decline. Head injuries changed her personality drastically, and she left Hollywood. Over the next few decades she was in and out of mental hospitals. She recovered in the 1980s, but never returned to film.

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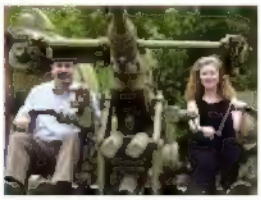

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A Dummy and His Sidekick

by Carl Zebrowski

Poor Edgar Bergen. To make a living, he put himself out there in public as the seemingly naïve and humorless foil for his wisecracking comedic partner. His polite small talk and sincere questioning ran smack into sharp responses suggesting he was stupid, ignorant, and incompetent. "Who the hell ever told you you were a good ventriloquist?" was one sort of attack he fielded regularly. Such is the ventriloquist's magic that the audience can get hypnotized into thinking the human a fool and the dummy the brains behind the operation.

Listening to Bergen and his dummy Charlie McCarthy on the radio, as the WWII generation did, it was easy enough to forget that the two spoke from the same mind. Bergen was essentially making his living bickering with himself. And it was a good living. Enough of an audience tuned in to his radio broadcast every week to make it most the popular show in America in 1942 and 1943. At Christmastime, Charlie McCarthy dummies flew off department store shelves, even at the steep price of $10 each (equal to about $150 today).

Bergen (actually Bergren back then) was a high-school kid in Chicago when he found someone to carve Charlie McCarthy's wooden head to resemble a sketch he'd drawn of a redheaded newsboy he knew. He made Charlie's body himself. It was about time that he had a proper dummy of his own, too—he'd been practicing ventriloquism for a handful of years already, after learning the basics from a pamphlet. "At eleven," *Time* magazine reported in 1944, "Edgar Bergen had found that he could throw his voice (his mother was forever answering the door in response to pleas of mysterious old men who begged to be let in)."

Bergen took his talent public for the first time during his college days at Northwestern University, performing at a church across the street from where he lived. Before long, he was earning money as a ventriloquist and magician. The next step in his entertainment career was into the vaudeville and nightclub circuit, dropping the second R from his surname to make it easier to say and remember.

COURTESY OF WWW.DOCTORMACRO.COM

Is there a dummy here? Charlie McCarthy slung clever barbs. Edgar Bergen got cut by them—and cashed the paycheck.

The touring paid off. Rudy Vallee, host of the weekly radio show *Royal Gelatin Hour*, saw Bergen's act at a club. Impressed, he invited Bergen to appear with him on December 17, 1936. The episode was a hit, and Bergen got booked for a 13-week-run.

The stint with Vallee led to a permanent show for Bergen, known by the war years as *The Charlie McCarthy Show*. Besides the ventriloquist and his smart-alecky co-star, the list of personalities appearing regularly on the broadcast included W.C. Fields, who showed up to carry on a long-running mock feud with McCarthy, both of them dressed in tuxedo and top hat. There were other dummies, too, most famously the grumpy old maid Effie Klinker and dopey bumpkin Mortimer Snerd.

As Bergen and McCarthy reached the peak of their success during the war years, they, like many stars, made a point of giving something back. Not long after Pearl Harbor, Charlie temporarily exchanged his tux for a US Army Air Forces uniform to help promote military enlistment. (He then tried to join the marines, an attempted double-dip into the military that ended with a court-martial skit guest-starring Jimmy Stewart, who by then was a lieutenant in the air forces.)

Later on, Bergen and McCarthy traveled to Alaska, the Aleutian Islands, and Greenland and appeared on special radio shows to entertain GIs. In 1943 they starred in *Stage Door Canteen*, a Hollywood musical designed to boost American morale and promote the sale of war bonds.

The war ended for Bergen as it did for many Americans—with marriage. Back in 1941 he had noticed an attractive pair of legs in the audience for his radio show and asked to meet their owner. One thing led to another, and the 38-year-old ventriloquist was dating 19-year-old fashion model Frances Westerman. They kept up a long-distance relationship for the next four years and got married on June 28, 1945. (Daughter and future actress Candice Bergen was born nine months after the Japanese surrender.)

Bergen's radio show continued into the fifties, when radio stars who remained successful did so by smoothly transitioning into television. Edgar Bergen was not one of them—by choice. Perhaps he feared his act wouldn't translate well to a visual medium with close-ups. His own dummy, after all, had spent years ripping him about his looks and about moving his lips. ★

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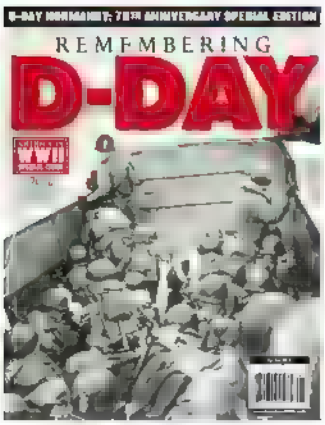

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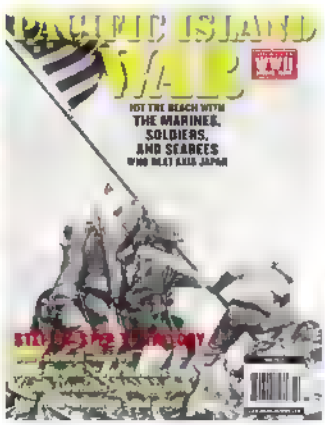

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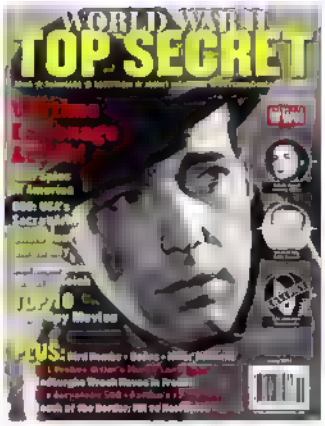

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Running Circles around the Axis

by Arnold T. Blumberg

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The Flash was fast. Americans might have wished the war would speed by like he did. But at least wartime comic book readers could depend on him to do his part to defend the innocent and defeat evil as quickly as his feet could carry him.

Flash made his comics debut just after the start of the war, in January 1940, in a self-titled series published by All American (which later merged with two other publishers to form the heavy-hitter DC). Created by writer Gardner Fox and artist Harry Lampert as the alter ego of former college football star Jay Garrick, Flash would soon really *need* the power of speed that he obtained from breathing in vapors from hard water: he not only had his own series but also began appearing in *All-Flash Quarterly*, *All Star Comics* (as a member of the Justice Society of America), and *Comic Cavalcade*.

Like many Golden Age superheroes, Flash was seen on comic book covers fighting for the Allies in one way or another before America had even entered the war. In some cases, such as on the cover of *Flash Comics No. 12*, soldiers shown fighting him were drawn so their uniforms didn't explicitly reveal their national affiliation.

After the war ended, the popularity of superheroes declined, Flash included. Between 1948 and 1951, *All-Flash*, *Flash Comics*, and *All Star* were canceled. Garrick disappeared for a decade, and a new Flash, with the alter ego Barry Allen, was introduced in 1956. Garrick did come back later, with a revamped origin story. Today, a new *Flash* television series airs on the CW network, giving another generation a chance to root for a superhero with a long, patriotic history. ★

Dr. Arnold T. Blumberg *is an educator and the author of books on comic books and other pop culture topics. He resides in Baltimore, Maryland.*

Above, left: America's superheroes fought the Axis even before the United States itself did. Here, the Axis soldiers don't have clear national markings on their uniforms, though the shape of their helmets may provide a clue—not German, at least. Above, right: Flash again intervenes against the Axis early in the war. Above, center: Publication of special issues like this was a good sign a superhero was popular with readers.

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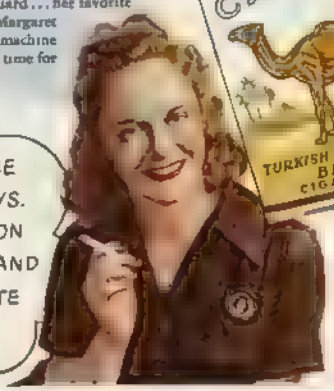

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One Man's Museum

by Eric Ethier

At the Museum of World War II in Natick, Massachusetts, what looks like a sci-fi movie prop is really a 1940s Japanese camera used to train aerial gunners for combat.

THE MUSEUM of World War II looks like any single-story office building anywhere. Locals in the town of Natick, Massachusetts, just west of Boston, pass it every day without giving it a second glance. But within its windowless walls is the sort of collection that, as actor and filmmaker Tom Hanks has said, "cannot be seen anywhere else in the world."

Ken Rendell, founder and director of the museum, spent 35 years building the collection—*his* collection—before putting it on limited public display 15 years ago. These days his museum is open for pre-scheduled visits five days a week, and it's regularly filled with contemplative veterans, wide-eyed schoolchildren, and history buffs. "There just isn't anything remotely like it," Rendell says. "Every other World War II museum takes the national viewpoint. I really take the *inter*national viewpoint."

From the moment that visitors step inside, the museum's uniqueness is abundantly clear. Its 30 galleries touch on everything from the rise of German nationalism to the war trials that followed the surrenders of Germany and Japan. Visitors reach the displays by walking through a narrow, maze-like path that encourages claustrophobia. It's a subtle and deliberate design effect that lends immediacy particularly to the exhibits on the Holocaust and occupied Europe.

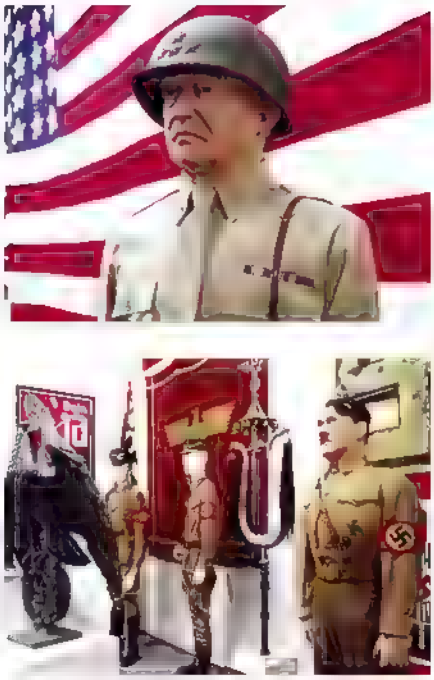
In the Holocaust section, visitors come upon the original blue-striped garb of a concentration camp prisoner. A letter states that a young girl "who knew her mother was dead and felt sure her father must be dead also, just faded away." It's Alice Frank's scrawled note revealing the death of her granddaughter, Anne, at the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp in March 1945.

To learn more about these objects, and the rest of the extraordinary contents of this treasure chest of a museum, visitors are encouraged to use the Acoustiguides, audio devices programmed to provide information at more than 50 designated stops. The spoken descriptions are a great help, as the exhibits feature few signs or dates. "I don't put signs on anything that is in English," Rendell says. "You have to look at things slowly. That's *my* version of interactive."

Extensive floor space in the museum is devoted to the US war experience in North Africa, Europe, and the Pacific. Nothing represents that experience better than the museum's 1942 Sherman M4 tank, whose 30-ton bulk, desert paint scheme, and shrapnel scars appear larger than life within the building's tight confines. No less memorable is an eye-opening display of home-front propaganda samples that show how the overseas enemies were perceived in the States. One standout is a roll of novelty toilet paper printed with mocking caricatures of Japanese and of Adolf Hitler.

Also compelling are scraps of Japanese planes and the personal effects of Japanese pilots shot down at Pearl Harbor, hand-painted leather jackets of American bomber pilots, a six-pronged grappling hook used by the 2nd US Rangers to climb Pointe du Hoc on D-Day, and a like-new US Army jeep complete with a .30-caliber machine gun and piles of spent shell casings.

The broad scope of displays distinguishes this museum from others. So do the touchable artifacts. Most of the galleries contain objects that visitors can pick up and examine, including, for example, a club that Japanese soldiers used on American POWs and helmets gathered on the Normandy beaches. "I find that when you put everything behind glass, it becomes remote and less real," Rendell



ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY: COURTESY OF MUSEUM OF WORLD WAR II

Upper left: The Museum of World War II's General George Patton model wears Patton's own helmet. Lower left: The Nazi section's bronze eagle and golden swastika (behind Adolf Hitler) are from the Nuremberg Rallies. The Hitler mannequin's shirt was actually Hitler's. Right: Wrecked in North Africa, this 1942 Sherman tank was refitted as an M42B1E9 flamethrower for a planned invasion of Japan.

explains. "I want people to have a sense of it being real. The war was intense. And this way you get an inkling of...that intensity."

Of course, not everything here is touchable. Hands-off items include marvelous life size likenesses of some of the war's major figures: General George S. Patton (topped with his battle helmet), British Prime Minister Winston Churchill (wearing his original air-raid coverall, known as the "siren suit"), and Hitler (dressed in the brown *Sturmabteilung* (SA) shirt that American GIs took from his Munich apartment in April 1945).

Virtually every object in this place is worth a close look. Most are worth several minutes of study. It's impossible not to stop and gawk at the huge swastika and bronze eagle that Patton claimed from the walls of Nuremberg's Nazi party rally ground, the Luitpold Arena, during the war's final days. Another one-of-a-kind item is the Medal of Honor awarded to David McCampbell, the US Navy ace who shot down 34 Japanese planes during his single combat tour. Another is the table-size relief map of Iwo Jima used for briefings prior to the US Marine Corps's invasion of the island in February 1945. Here, too, is film equipment used by Joseph Goebbels' Nazi propaganda machine and a curious set of footwear fashioned out of rope by a desperate Russian soldier at Stalingrad.

Visitors will also marvel at the museum's comprehensive collection of military uniforms, including the snow-white gear of the 10th Mountain Division, the mud-brown garb of the British Eighth Army, and the intimidating, charcoal black dress of Hitler's elite *Schutzstaffel* (SS) troops.

How Hitler came to control the minds of his SS men and of average German civilians is explained in the area devoted to the rise of Nazism. Hitler's own simple yet chillingly vivid sketch of a Nazi rally banner represents the beginning of his desire to influence the German people. A set of period toy soldiers, a doll dressed in a Nazi uniform, and a flag-topped miniature U-boat represent his eventual complete control of even children's dreams. Later in the war, Soviets spread their own perspective of Nazism, as can be seen in their grisly propaganda leaflets dispersed to Hitler's soldiers on the eastern front.

The Museum of World War II betrays no agenda and contains no hint of political correctness. "I designed it to allow people to make of the museum what they want to," Rendell says. "Everything is represented as it was seen and known at the time, not how we would have liked it to have been." As singular as his facility already is, Rendell hopes eventually to double its size, displaying more of his collection and adding an educational center, an enlarged library and archives, and a cutting-edge theater. The goal, he says, is for "people to experience the museum, not [just] visit it." ★

ERIC ETHIER *is the assistant editor of* America in WWII.

IN A NUTSHELL

WHAT The Museum of World War II

WHERE Natick, Massachusetts

WHY A collection of WWII artifacts like no other in the world • Touchable treasures spread throughout the galleries, including genuine D-Day helmets and clubs wielded by Japanese POW-camp guards • General George S. Patton's personally marked-up invasion map of Sicily

For more information visit the museum's website at www.museumofworldwarii.com

breakout

from normandy

The Allies put their feet in Europe on D-Day.
But they got trapped on the coast for seven weeks.
Then came a master plan to punch through German lines.

by Eric Grenier

breakout from normandy

by Éric Grenier

NEWS OF D-DAY ELECTRIFIED THE FREE WORLD. In a single day—June 6, 1944—a massive liberation force led by the United States and Great Britain had hurled itself onto the shores of Normandy, France, to start freeing Europe from Nazi bondage. ¶Operation Overlord, as the Allied assault was called, had cracked the Atlantic Wall—the Nazis' imposing defenses along Europe's western coast—and had given the Western powers a solid foothold on the Continent. More and more troops and supplies streamed ashore. The goal was to build up and burst inland, deep into France and onward to Germany and victory.

A month after D-Day, however, the liberators were stuck. Trapped within a narrow fringe of coastline, the American, British, and Canadian armies under the overall command of British General Bernard L. Montgomery swelled steadily and crowded the beachhead to the breaking point. But gaining ground to expand the Allied foothold and go after the German armies remained an elusive goal.

In the American sector, Lieutenant General Omar Bradley was determined to set loose his pent-up First Army. So far, Normandy's vexing terrain and stiff German resistance had foiled his plans. But in early July, he stood before map-covered walls in a plank floored mess tent, puzzling out a new scheme. "By July 10 the plan was born, and [Brigadier General Truman C.] Thorson named it COBRA," Bradley later wrote. "But it was destined to become known as the Normandy Breakout—the most decisive battle of our war in western Europe." The operation would begin on July 25.

Post-D-Day Realities Set In

THE ORIGINAL NORMANDY invasion plan had called for the Allies to secure two important cities, Caen and Cherbourg, on D Day—ambitious goals under the best circumstances. The British and Canadian armies on the Allied left were to capture Caen, a vital road hub just 15 miles southeast of the coast and a gateway to easily traversed ground to the south and east. On the right, meanwhile, Bradley's Americans were to slash west onto the northward jutting Cotentin Peninsula to secure the vital deepwater port of Cherbourg. After that, the Yanks were to plunge south and gain tank-friendly ground beyond the town of Saint Lô. This would facilitate a westward thrust into Brittany to capture the port city of Brest and a scythe-like sweep in the opposite direction, to the Seine River.

When the sun went down on D Day, of course, none of these unrealistic goals had been achieved. The soldiers of German Army Group B were fierce defenders. Led by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel until July 17 (when he was severely injured in a car accident caused by Allied aerial strafing), and then by Field Marshal Günther von Kluge, the Germans were severely outgunned and couldn't count on much aerial help from the *Luftwaffe*. Nevertheless, General Heinrich Eberbach's Panzer Group West (later renamed the Fifth Panzer Army) stonewalled Montgomery before Caen. And on Bradley's front, General Paul Hausser's Seventh Army troops proved just as stubborn. Caen, Cherbourg, and Saint Lô remained beyond the Allies' grasp.

The Americans' problems stemmed largely from Normandy's *bocage*, terrain that was traversed by ancient hedgerows planted as fences and that had grown into thick ridges of dense earth and tree roots. For GIs, simply *finding* the enemy in the seemingly endless lines of semi-solid hedges was all but impossible. By day the Americans alternated between hunkering low in foxholes and venturing out in squads to sniff out Germans. Predictable exchanges of rifle and mortar fire followed. "We usually got pretty busy at night," one infantryman said. "There were these sunken paths in between hedgerows and that's what we traveled on. And we never made a frontal attack on a hedgerow; we always tried to outflank it. Sometimes we bypassed a hedgerow filled with Germans and didn't even know they were there until they opened up at us from behind. It was a funny kind of war."

Hammering away along a broad front wasn't gaining much ground for the Allies, but it was whittling away at the enemy. Between D-Day and July 23, the Germans could replace only a few of the 250 tanks they lost and less than one of every 10 soldiers killed, wounded, or captured. "I came here with the fixed determination of making effective your order to stand fast at any price," Kluge wrote to Adolf Hitler on July 21. "But one has to see by experience that this price must be paid in the slow but sure annihilation of the force.... In spite of intense efforts, the moment has drawn near when this front, already so heavily strained, will break."

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Two factors trapped the Allies in their beachhead after D-Day: Normandy's impassable hedgerows and the German forces they hid. The US First Army needed new tactics to break free. Previous spread: On July 25, 1944, the breakout—Operation Cobra—begins. GIs of the 47th Infantry, in the VII Corps's 9th Division, step through a hedgerow gap cut by a bulldozer. Above: Elsewhere on the line, a mortar man lobs a round at the enemy. Opposite, top: With a dead German at his feet, a sergeant probes a hedgerow on July 21—before Cobra. Going over or around the rows was slow and risky. Opposite, center: Cobra used new hedgerow tactics—aerial bombing, bulldozers, and tanks with teeth.

Montgomery and Bradley were no less concerned about their own armies' fates, if for the opposite reason. By mid-July, Montgomery's 21st Army Group had grown so much that maneuvering was difficult within its cramped foothold. Nasty English Channel storms (including a June 19–21 gale that heavily damaged the Allies' Mulberry artificial harbors off Normandy) had slowed the flow of ammunition and other supplies to the front. Meanwhile, Cherbourg's German defenders had destroyed the city's harbor facilities, important assets the Allies desperately needed to capture. The Allies were stalemated, and there was talk of the unthinkable: stagnant, WWI style trench warfare.

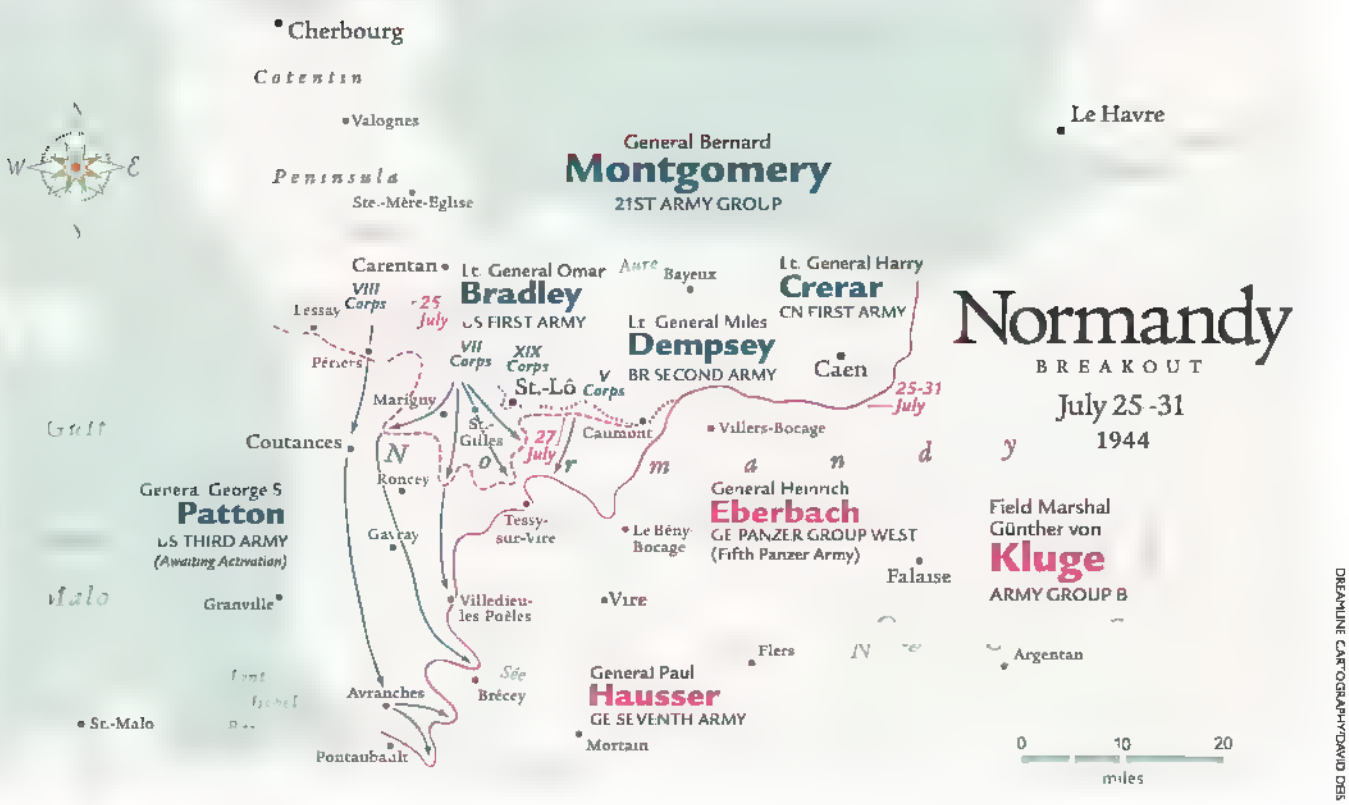
A New Plan: Operation Cobra

Out of this growing exasperation sprang Operation Cobra. Bradley's goal remained the same as before: bust through the German lines into the dry, open ground beyond Saint Lô where his mechanized forces could use their numbers and speed to greater advantage and power their way south and west into Brittany to secure Brest. Under the Cobra plan, however, Bradley would pinpoint his attack on the one-mile stretch of the Saint Lô–Périers road, immediately west of Saint-Lô. And Bradley added one new element. Drawing on Montgomery's unprecedented (if minimally successful) use of air power against Caen on July 7, he decided to try to blast a path through German lines with saturation bombing. That job would fall to the US Eighth Army Air Force and IX Tactical Air Command.

Following the heavy aerial bombing and an artillery assault, Major General J. Lawton Collins's VII Corps would lead the attack across the Saint Lô–Périers Highway. His 4th, 9th, and 30th Infantry Divisions would capture Marigny and Saint-Gilles, allowing the 1st Infantry Division and the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions to pour through the gap and drive westward to Coutances to seal off the Cotentin Peninsula.

Major General Troy H. Middleton's VIII Corps would advance on Collins's right, while Major General Charles H. Corlett's XIX Corps and Major General Leonard T. Gerow's V Corps struck out on his left, in the Vire River area. Then, with the First Army estab-

breakout from normandy by Éric Grenier



lished in a north-south line stretching from Caumont to Fougères, Bradley would activate Lieutenant General George S. Patton's Third Army and send it storming westward into Brittany to liberate the much-needed Breton ports.

TO DEAL WITH THE *BOCAGE*, the Americans had been experimenting with a variety of solutions, including explosives and tanks fitted with bulldozer blades. Sergeant Curtis G. Culin, Jr., of the 102nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, devised a set of sharp, steel teeth from German tank obstacles scavenged from the Normandy beachhead. Welded to the tanks' hulls, the teeth turned Shermans into so-called Rhinos that could plow and slice through hedgerows rather than climb over them, exposing their thinly armored bellies. By the time Cobra was launched, roughly 60 percent of Bradley's tanks featured these teeth. Ultimately, however, concentrated bombing would prove to be the most effective weapon against the *bocage*.

Cobra's launch was timed to occur immediately after a devastating, and hopefully decisive, British and Canadian attack on Caen. To that end, Montgomery launched Operation Goodwood on July 18. Four days of fighting finally secured the city, but little more. Montgomery later insisted that his intent was to capture the city and facilitate American efforts by holding German armor in his front. But many of his American counterparts, including Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower, had expected more, such as a gap-opening thrust toward Falaise. Eisenhower urged Montgomery to renew his attacks and told him he was now "pinning our immediate hopes on Bradley's attack."

Cobra Begins—with a Pounding

BAD WEATHER POSTPONED COBRA from its scheduled July 21 launch to July 24. American planes were already in the air that day when the operation was again called off. The order came too late to prevent some of the bombers from unknowingly dropping their cargoes on American positions, killing or wounding more than 150 men.

Finally, at 9:40 A.M. on July 25, the blast of artillery signaled Cobra's official launch. In the 90 minutes that followed, some 2,000 B-17 and B-24 heavy bombers and B-26 medium bombers, supported by waves of fighter-bombers and fighters, darkened the skies above the target zone. Despite heavy cloud cover, the bombers dropped more than 4,000 tons of bombs and napalm on a 7,000- by 2,500-yard patch of ground just beyond the Saint-Lô–Périers Highway.

Newspaper correspondent Ernie Pyle was with 4th Division infantrymen staring up in awe at a sky filled with waves of droning aircraft. "As we watched, there crept into our consciousness a realization that the windrows of exploding bombs were easing back toward us, flight by flight, instead of gradually forward, as the plan called for," he wrote. "Then we were horrified by the suspicion that those machines, high in the sky and completely detached from us, were aiming their bombs at the smoke line on the ground—and a gentle breeze was drifting the smoke line back over us!"

Pyle rode out the maelstrom beneath a wagon in a shed. "An hour or so later, I began to get sore all over, and by midafternoon my back and shoulders ached as though I'd been beaten with a club," he wrote. The accident knocked some smaller units completely out of action and sapped morale. One company commander said, "The shock was awful. A lot of the men were sitting around after the bombing in a complete daze."

Tragically, many bombs landed among frontline GIs, killing or wounding 600. Among the dead was Lieutenant General Lesley J. McNair. Playing a role in the Allied deception plan dubbed Operation Fortitude in the run-up to D-Day, McNair had "commanded" FUSAG, the fictitious 1st US Army Group. The FUSAG ruse had helped convince Hitler to withhold considerable reinforcements from Normandy in anticipation of the "main" Allied assault, presumably under Patton, in the Pas-de-Calais area. McNair's death spurred quick criticism of the army. "It is questionable in this observer's mind, just as one correspondent, Jack Tait, has put it in a dispatch from London, 'Who was most dazed by the bombs, the Germans or the Americans?'" wrote military analyst Hanson W. Baldwin.

Actually, the aerial blitz had indeed stunned the Germans. General Fritz Bayerlein's Panzer Lehr Division took an especially horrific pounding. "The planes kept coming over, as if on a conveyer belt, and the bomb carpets unrolled in great rectangles," Bayerlein later recalled. "My flak [anti-aircraft artillery] had hardly opened its mouth, when the batteries received direct hits which knocked out half the guns and silenced the rest. After an hour I had no communication with anybody, even by radio. By noon nothing was visible but dust and smoke. My front lines looked like the face of the moon and at least 70 per cent of my troops were out of action—dead, wounded, crazed, or numbed." The virtual destruction of Bayerlein's division left Hausser with only one mobile strike force, the 2nd SS Panzer Division.

When the air attacks ceased around 11 A.M., Collins's 4th, 9th, and 30th Infantry Divisions advanced. Meanwhile, P-47 Thunderbolt fighter-bombers shredded the roads leading toward

Top: A GI in a jeep talks with an M5A1 Stuart light tank crew in a battle-ravaged village on July 27. (The jeep's front bar prevents decapitation by wire strung across roads by the enemy.) Getting tanks into open ground beyond Saint-Lô would let US forces rush inland and seize objectives to the east and west. Cobra used aerial bombing to cut a path through the hedgerows. Once infantry secured the path, tanks raced through. Above: On the road to Saint-Lô, an American truck hit by enemy artillery burns.

the front, blocking enemy reinforcements from reaching the lines. One regiment of the German 275th Infantry Division was smashed before it could get into action.

The assault peeled open a three-mile-wide stretch of front, but initial gains were just one to three miles, not as deep as had been hoped. Bomb craters and clogged roads slowed advancing American armor and infantry, too, as did stubborn resistance from German frontline units. When Collins's vanguard reached the Germans beyond the bombardment zone, the advance ground to a halt. In the center, the 4th Infantry Division made good progress. But the 9th Infantry Division failed to break through to Marigny, and the 30th Infantry Division ran into stiff resistance before reaching Saint Gilles

AT DAY'S END, some American officers questioned the bombing's effect. "There is no indication of bombing in where we have gone so far," reported 30th Division commander Major General Leland S. Hobbs. The robust German response had even Bradley wondering

whether the plan had failed. Collins thought otherwise. True, the enemy had put up a fight, but a disjointed one that smacked of disorganization and smashed communications

The following day, Collins again sent his VII Corps men south. To the northwest, Middleton's VIII Corps troops began pressing German units along the Cotentin coast. With luck, the two corps would trap much of Hausser's army on the peninsula, above Coutances.

With the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions following behind, Collins's infantry began to make progress. Some units penetrated five miles from their starting positions. "The effectiveness of the bombardment was still evident," the 4th Division reported. "Even though it was a day later many of the Germans still looked very shaky. A good many prisoners were taken and they looked beaten to a frazzle." Encouraged, Collins continued the advance into the night.

The 1st Infantry Division, which had fought at North Africa, Sicily, and Omaha Beach, was now tasked with capturing Marigny, with support from Combat Command B of the 3rd Armored Division. Slowed by craters, hedgerows, and roadblocks and taking heavy casualties, they ran into the German 353rd Infantry Division and companies of the 2nd SS Panzer Division. The 3rd Armored tanks slugged it out with the 2nd SS Panzer with no immediate result. On the morning of July 27, however, the 1st Division's 18th Infantry Regiment secured the town.

On the left, the 2nd Armored Division rumbled through scattered resistance to claim Saint Gilles.

Signs of Hope

COBRA WAS GAINING MOMENTUM. On the afternoon of July 26, Colonel Brenton Wallace of Patton's Third Army headquarters flew over the front with a Ninth Air Force officer. "From the air," he later wrote, "we could see clearly the clouds of dust and smoke caused by the armored columns spearheading the attack as they rolled along the roads and lanes or charged through the

hedgerows like bulls on a rampage. It was a spectacular sight."

Bomb-shocked German units were trying to plug holes in their besieged lines on the fly, but reinforcements were hard to find. Kluge promised Bayerlein a battalion of 60 Tiger tanks to block the American advance and only five showed up. "That night," Bayerlein recalled, "I assembled the remnants of my division south-west of Canisy. I had 14 tanks in all. We could do nothing but retreat."

The American drive toward Coutances continued on July 27. "American armor was rolling everywhere," read a post-campaign account in the army newspaper *Stars and Stripes*. "The 2nd and 3rd Armd. Divs. jabbed along on the left while 6th Armd. punched to the right. It was like old home week at Fort Knox."

Collins's 1st Infantry Division and Colonel Truman E. Bou-

Opposite: US troops creep through Coutance's ruins near the unharmed Cathedral of Our Lady on July 28. The lead GI has a grenade on his M1 Garand's launcher. Cobra sought to trap Germany's Seventh Army on the north-jutting Cotentin Peninsula by capturing Coutances, at the peninsula's base. The Germans slipped away, many to be captured later. Above, left: On August 1, 4th Armored Division officers speak with a nun in Avranches, some 30 miles south of Coutances. Above, right: Captured Germans march to a stockade near Avranches on August 2.

dinot's Combat Command B of the 3rd Armored Division ground their way toward Coutances from the northeast, while Middleton's VIII Corps troops closed in from the north. Hausser was struggling to hold off Collins's VII Corps long enough to avoid encirclement. But the *bocage* was hampering him, just as it had Bradley. Forced to stick close to the roads, his armor and antitank units made easy targets for P-47s working in unprecedented close cooperation with American ground forces.

Heeding Bradley's broad orders to "maintain unrelenting pressure" on the enemy, American armored units continued clattering forward on July 28. Unfortunately, Boudinot's columns had to stop within sight of Coutances to avoid becoming entangled with VIII Corps troops. So, with the German 6th Parachute Regiment and units of the 2nd SS Panzer and 17th SS Panzer Grenadier Divisions covering the withdrawal, the bulk of Hausser's intact forces north of Coutances were able to slip southeast before the town fell to the US 4th Armored Division that afternoon.

To the east, German units responded with more aggression. The 2nd Panzer Division, dispatched by Eberhard to firm up Hausser's Seventh Army, crossed the Vire River near Tessy-sur-Vire to confront the US XIX Corps. Reinforced with 2nd Armored Division tanks, the XIX Corps had been charged with clearing the territory between the town of Vire and the river's western banks. The 2nd Panzer rebuffed determined American assaults on July 29 and 30. Then, when the 116th Panzer arrived, the two divisions launched an attack meant to isolate and trap XIX Corps forces at Granville. The tactic failed. Fighting around Tessy-sur-Vire was tense, but by July 31 American V Corps and British Second Army units were closing in on Vire, forcing the German armor to withdraw. By the next day, Tessy-sur-Vire was in American hands. The threat to the Americans' eastern flank was gone.

German resistance was beginning to crack. In places, Bradley's First Army had pushed the lines of Hausser's Seventh Army back 15 miles, leaving devastation in its wake. A US Third Army ordnance officer who drove along the First Army's path to Avranches a few days later would find "each town an awful monument to hell itself. The stench of unburied bodies lying in the unmerciful summer sun was overpowering at times...."

South of Roncey, German forces that had slipped the American trap at Coutances unknowingly rushed into another one set by Combat Command B of the 2nd Armored Division. Lieutenant John B. Wong of the 238th Engineer Combat Battalion's Company C was there for the opening moments of what became known as the Roncey Massacre. "The wait ended abruptly," he recalled. "As the enemy's leading elements came into artillery and tank cannon range we opened fire. Then the mortars and automatic weapons joined the battle. The shells crashed in on the unsuspecting Germans in an exploding hailstorm of steel. The destruction of this part of the Seventh Army had begun."

The pounding continued into the next day, when IX Tactical Air Force planes pounced on the seemingly endless line of cutoff German vehicles, some 300 of which were destroyed.

On the evening of July 29, meanwhile, elements of the 6th Armored Division's 50th Armored Infantry Battalion slipped into Granville, whose defenders had pulled out. And after smashing through one patchwork German line west of Gavray, the 4th Armored chugged 25 miles in just 36 hours to claim Avranches, the doorway to Brittany, by nightfall on July 30. Avranches, too, had been abandoned, though things got a little hairy overnight when Germans passing through the area stumbled into American outposts below the town. In the confused fighting that broke out, Private William H. Whitson, a machine gunner in the 53rd Armored Infantry Battalion, "put out of action twenty five light enemy vehicles, killed fifty of the enemy soldiers, and demoralized the remainder of the enemy party. As a result of this devastating fire, more than five hundred Germans surrendered." Whitson, who died at his gun, was posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross.

By the evening of July 31, the Americans had secured not only Avranches, but also nearby Pontaubault and its vital bridge over the Sélune River. Three more Sélune bridges were in Allied hands by the morning of August 1, just as a fresh 6th Armored column coming from Granville arrived to relieve the tired men of the 4th Armored.

Breakout Accomplished

Operation Cobra was a success. After seven weeks of yard-by-yard slogging after D-Day, in one week American units had moved forward as far as 30 miles. Bradley's First Army had captured some 20,000 German soldiers. "Someone has to tell the Führer that if the Americans get through at Avranches they will be out of the woods and they'll be able to do what they want," Kluge said on the morning of July 31. By the time he uttered these words, the town had already fallen.

Above: Lieutenant General George Patton arrives near Coutances on July 29, surrounded by townsfolk and GIs. Sidelined in January 1944 for slapping hospitalized soldiers in August 1943, on August 1, 1944, he would return to action as head of the new US Third Army. Opposite: Operation Cobra's dramatic results raised American spirits. These cheery GIs are passing a smashed German army car, repurposed as a sign post.

On August 1, Bradley activated the Third Army, and Patton's eager troops began the drive into Brittany. Hitler, meanwhile, expecting the miraculous from his demoralized troops, ordered Kluge to prepare an elaborate counterattack toward Mortain and Avranches. His idea, as it had long been, was to stalemate the Allies in northern France until enough of Germany's super weapons—V 2 rockets, jet aircraft, massive new tanks—were available to turn the war's tide. "When we reach the sea the American spearheads will be cut off," Hitler said. "We might even be able to cut off their entire bridgehead.... We must wheel north like lightning and turn the entire enemy front from the rear." It was pure fantasy. As *New York Times* correspondent Drew Middleton wrote, Kluge's armies had already bent too far. "Some good divisions remain between the Allies and Paris," Middleton continued, "but they slowly are being forced into a tactical situation in which they will be thinly spread over a long front facing the flower of the American and British armies, ardent and skilled in battle and flushed with confidence and victory."

Kluge launched his attack on August 7. But the work of Allied code-breakers minimized its surprise and damage. Instead of turning the Allied flank, the offensive exposed the Germans to gradual encirclement by British and Canadian troops from the north and American troops from the south. At Falaise, on August 21, the Allies closed a trap that netted some 50,000 German prisoners and brought the German border within reach—all as a direct consequence of Operation Cobra.

"I saw no foxholes or any other type of shelter or field fortifications," an American officer said after visiting the Falaise area. "The Germans were trying to run and had no place to run. They were probably too exhausted to dig.... They were probably too tired even to surrender." Hitler's desperate gambit had changed nothing. ★

ÉRIC GRENIER *of Ottawa, Canada, writes periodically for* America in WWII *about the US Army's battles against Nazi Germany*

Losing Dad

Hundreds of thousands of American men left children behind when they left home to fight. Many never returned.

What was it like to be young, innocent, and orphaned by war?

by Allyson Patton

America's military losses in World War II were staggering. Besides 670,000 wounded and 74,000 missing, there were 400,000 dead. And for every one of those, there were corresponding casualties at home: wives, parents, siblings, friends—and children.

Little is known about the lives and experiences of the estimated 183,000 American children whose fathers died in the war. One researcher calls them the "forgotten generation." No one interviewed them. No one collected their thoughts. No one thought much about them at all. That's how it usually goes. As one historian observed, "The child's perspective seldom appears in history."

These children of the lost—the youngest of whom are now approaching their 70s—call themselves war orphans. They want their fathers' stories to be known. "He was my hero," says one. "I talk with anyone who wants to hear about my dad."

LEFT: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF SANDRA MacDUFFEE VIA WWW.AWOL.ORG

Dads in a Time of War

At first, fathers were exempt from compulsory WWII military service. The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 required men 21 to 36 years old to register for a year's service, but fathers fell under the Class III deferments for men with dependents (III-A for those not working in essential war industries and III B for those who were). In 1941, as war seemed more and more likely, the service period expanded to 18 months, and the registration requirement stretched to include men 18 to 45 years old and then 18 to 65 (with those at the upper end of the latter range limited to stateside service). Still, fathers remained exempt, even as the Selective Service System eased its standards a bit to induct "less well qualified men."

Inevitably, however, America's military and civil leaders began to realize just how many men it would take to win the war. As that number grew, so did the debate about drafting dads. Finally, in October 1943, the Senate passed the Father Draft Act, eliminating the exempt status for "pre–Pearl Harbor fathers." That very month, 13,300 dads were drafted, nearly seven percent of the month's total draftees. In November, 25,700 fathers were drafted, and another 51,400 in December. In April 1944, conscripted fathers would number 114,600, more than half that month's total.

As fathers across the country said their farewells, mothers were left alone to keep things as normal as possible at home. But with

Above: The reunion wartime families longed for comes to life in a poster from 1943. That October, America started sending dads to war. Many never returned. Opposite: Private First Class John Chichilla, 5th Infantry Division, was one of the lost, killed in Luxembourg in January 1945. Here, he poses with his daughter, Sandra (now Sandra MacDuffee of Binghamton, New York), on a 1944 furlough.

Losing Dad

by Allyson Patton

the household's sole wage earner gone to war, it wasn't long before "normal" seemed like a luxury from a distant past.

Verna Mae Garland faced this grim reality in 1942. That year, her husband, Floyd, enlisted in the navy to avoid being drafted into the army. She thought he was making a mistake. "I don't feel like they would surely [draft] a man with a wife and three babies," she said. She found herself alone in Bingham, Illinois, with three small children, the oldest not yet four years old. Things got desperate fast. On June 18, with her husband gone only a month and still stationed stateside, she wrote to the governor of Illinois, "We have no means of support only $15 a month.... Is there any way that he can be sent home to help me raise my children?" The governor's office replied two days later, saying the state had no authority to discharge her husband. The letter suggested she write to her husband's commander or the US secretary of war.

To some war orphans, it doesn't matter whether their dads entered the service through the draft or as volunteers. To others, it matters a lot. "This certainly makes a difference," says Phyllis Noble, whose father was drafted into the army and died in the war. "My father's preference was to stay home and support his pregnant wife—pregnant with me—and his parents."

Vulnerable Newcomers In Combat

MOST FATHERS WHO were drafted or volunteered entered the service with the war already in high gear in Europe and the Asia Pacific theater. As latecomers, many stepped into battle-scarred frontline units as green replacements. Their training couldn't prepare them for combat's realities, and many didn't last long.

Phyllis Noble's dad, Private First Class Russell Philip Noble, was drafted in February 1942. He died on April 23, 1943, after tripping a booby trap left by retreating Germans in Libya. Bill Jackson's dad, Private First Class William Jackson, volunteered in 1944 and was killed in Germany on February 23, 1945, while taking fire during the Roer River crossings. Jerry W. Pinkerton's father, Private First Class Ralph C. Pinkerton, was drafted in May 1944 and killed in action on June 14, 1945, on Mindanao in the Philippines

Grieving Children

HOW THESE WAR ORPHANS DEALT WITH their loss and how it affected them into adulthood depended in part on how well they knew their dads. Some were extremely young, some unborn, when their fathers left for war. Deprived of even the vaguest memories of their dads, they have an intense longing to know who their fathers were.

To a war orphan of this sort, the best source of knowledge about dad was mom—provided dad and his death were open for discussion. The spirit of the era, however, made this unlikely. Advice to grieving moms about how best to help their grieving children was often terse. A 1945 article in one parenting magazine proclaimed, "If you can take it, your children can." For most moms of that era, taking it meant keeping a tight lid on their grief and requiring the same from their children.

JUDY HOFFMAN'S FATHER, Staff Sergeant Daniel Raymond Geis, was killed while test driving a jeep in Piccilli, Italy, on Christmas Eve 1943, two months before Judy's birth. His death, says Hoffman, was "*never* discussed by *anyone*.... I think during that time period of the early fifties, the feeling was that the widows should just get on with their life, and the kids should adjust to the new stepfather.... No one thought that children needed to grieve. Children weren't given much thought about anything, really, in those days."

As Hoffman got older, she became "intensely curious" about her father. Unfortunately, "although his parents stayed in touch until his mother died, they never talked about him to me."

Susan Johnson Hadler's father, Second Lieutenant David Selby Johnson, was killed when he stepped on a landmine in Mechernich, Germany, on April 12, 1945. She was two and a half months old when he died. From her mother, says Hadler, there was "silence about my father. I was deeply affected by her silence and knowing almost nothing about him. I longed to know about him...."

Phyllis Noble was an infant when her father died. She and her mother "occasionally talked about my father's death. She's the one who told me the story of how he died.... [But] no one ever asked how I was doing, if I missed this man who I had never met."

Unlike Hoffman, Hadler, and Noble, Bill Jackson knew his father. He was 10 years old when his father died. Before the war, his dad, a mechanical engineer and former executive assistant to the president of Armco Steel, had taken over as general manager of his father-in-law's cinema chain, Mid State Theatres, in Clearfield County, Pennsylvania. As Nazi Germany went on its rampage through Europe, the elder Jackson traveled to civic clubs throughout the county, urging US military involvement to support England and France. But once the United States joined the war, critics faulted him for not serving in the military. So in 1944, at age 37, he volunteered for the army and fought in Europe with the

LEFT: COURTESY OF JERRY W. PINKERTON OPPOSITE: COURTESY OF WILLIAM S. JACKSON

Above: Private First Class Ralph C. Pinkerton was drafted in May 1944. In June the next year, he was killed in the Philippines. Because many fathers went to the front as late-war replacements, they were more vulnerable than seasoned troops. Many became casualties. Opposite: Private First Class William Jackson volunteered in 1944 and died in the February 1945 Roer River crossings in Germany. Here, he stands with his son, Bill, at a house his wife rented to be near him during his training at Camp Croft in Spartanburg, South Carolina.

Losing Dad by Allyson Patton

104th Infantry "Timberwolf" Division. His army buddies, most in their late teens, called him Pops

Jackson's memories of his dad and of his own life after his father's death are quite clear. He remembers that after his mother received the telegram with the news, "She was very stoic, very private—no public show of emotion. She got the ironing board out. Mom internalized it."

LEFT: COURTESY OF SUSAN JOHNSON HADLER

Fortunately, Jackson was old enough to have his own memories of his dad. He didn't have to depend on someone else to fill a blank space. Jackson remembers a flesh-and-blood man who played war with him when he was on leave. And later, the man Jackson's widowed mother eventually married wasn't threatened by the memory of Jackson's father. Instead, he worked to honor him, and it proved pivotal to Jackson's overall reaction to losing his dad.

Jerry Pinkerton was four when his father was killed by Japanese machine gun fire on Mindanao. His father's death "was freely discussed, although not a frequent theme," he says. "This was beneficial to me."

Pinkerton and his younger sister lived with their maternal grandparents while their mother worked in another town during the week and stayed with them on weekends. This was a pattern in many homes where the father went to war. The mothers took their children and moved in with extended family, mostly grandparents, to share the financial burden and childcare. Very often, for women whose husbands died in the war, this became a permanent arrangement. In many instances it added to the emotional burden carried by the widows and their children.

Noble says, "My mother saw no alternative but to live with her parents. For my mother, as a practical arrangement, living with her parents made sense. But it was psychologically crushing, the end of a dream for her." After the death of her husband, Noble's mom grew depressed. She never remarried.

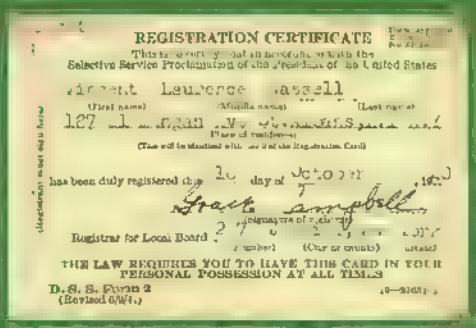
Hadler, too, lived with her grandparents, "until my grandfather died of polio when I was three years old.... I loved my grandparents, but was sunk in sorrow when my grandfather, who was like a father to me, died." That same year, Hadler's mother remarried

wedded to the home front

What a difference a year can make. According to the US Census Bureau, 1,404,000 couples married in 1939. The following year, the number was 17 percent higher, and it was higher again the year after that. Why? Some say it was because of the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940.

Signed into law by President Franklin Roosevelt on September 16, the legislation known as the Selective Service Act ushered in the first peacetime draft in US history. Initially, all males 21 to 36 years old were required to register with the Selective Service System.

Before the first draft lottery numbers were pulled on October 29, 1940, Roosevelt addressed calming words to a nation that knew war might be coming soon. Evoking George Washington's Continental Army, he said, "Ever since that first muster, our democratic army has existed for one purpose only: the defense of our freedom. It is for that purpose and that purpose only that you will be asked to answer the call to training."



REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that in accordance with the Selective Service Proclamation of the President of the United States

Vincent Lawrence Hassell

has been duly registered this 16 day of October 1940

Registrar for Local Board

THE LAW REQUIRES YOU TO HAVE THIS CARD IN YOUR PERSONAL POSSESSION AT ALL TIMES

D. S. S. Form 2 (Revised 6/9/41.)

NATIONAL WWII MUSEUM

As the draft became law in 1940, men rushed to register and get draft cards. Some also rushed to marry, perhaps to gain draft exemption. Soon, that wouldn't help.

Not all those asked to answer the call ended up in the military. There were ways out. One of them was marriage; men with dependents received draft deferments. Even while Congress was still deliberating whether to pass the act in 1940, more couples started tying the knot. The marriage rate increased by 50 percent from May to June, according to a survey conducted in 16 states that year. In 1941, the number of marriages increased to 1,696,000, and in 1942, to 1,772,000.

Among those speculating that men were marrying to avoid military service was the Selective Service system's director, Brigadier General Lewis B. Hershey. Marriages that had occurred "after the summer of 1941 might have been for the purpose of evading the draft," he said. True or not, the deferment for men with dependents came under attack as the need for replacement troops grew. It ended in October 1943 with passage of the Father Draft Act.

Whether couples married out of fear, love, desperation to have someone to come back home to, or because the economy improved, who can tell? What was certain about the increased marriage rate was that it led to a rise in births. In 1939 there were 2,466,000 registered births, and in 1943, 3,104,000. Three years later, the GIs were back from overseas, and the Baby Boom officially began.

—*Allyson Patton*

COURTESY OF PHYLLIS ELEANORE NOBLE

Hoffman also lived with her grandparents until she was about three years old, when her mother remarried. "My stepfather was a wonderful, loving man," she says. "I was lucky."

Carrying the Hurt Forward

THE BURDEN OF BEING A WAR ORPHAN didn't necessarily lighten with age. Even though his mother remarried, Pinkerton says, "Not having a father to help learn the masculine things—hunting, fishing, sports, etc.—left me an insecure person, which stayed with me until middle age."

A similar experience affected Hoffman. "In my 40s I received some therapy for issues which I did not realize were related to this part of my life, but were, in fact, based on it...," she says. "I spent a lot of time in my childhood and early adulthood wondering how my life would have been different if [my dad] had lived."

Noble "idolized" her father. "I daydreamed about him when I was a young child, imagining that the news of his death was a mistake, that I would run into him someday on a Chicago city bus, and we would rush to each other. He would lift me up into his arms. This is a lifelong unsated hunger." In her 70s now, Noble still "gets weepy" when she sees a young father and daughter together.

Reconnecting

THROUGH THE COURSE OF THEIR LIVES, many war orphans have sought to connect to their fathers any way they can. They research their dads' military records, visit their gravesites, retrace their last steps, write their stories, and talk to those who knew their fathers during the last months and weeks of their lives.

But the wall of silence can be thick, as it was for Hoffman's dad. Hoffman says she "never even knew how or where he died. When I received his [military] records, I was in my late 50s. I cried for a long time while I read them. I believe it was delayed grieving.... I have all of his medals, a scrapbook his mother kept of his childhood. And the AWON [American WWII Orphans Network—see the sidebar on page 30 for more] has been invaluable in keeping his memory alive for me."

FOR PINKERTON, visiting his dad's grave was very important. "But I came to this conclusion in my late 60s...," he says. "I just had an internal need to do it." In 2012, he and a veteran from his dad's unit went to Mindanao. With the help of a guide, they followed the route his dad had taken from his unit's beach landing on the island's northern end on May 10, 1945, to the small village where he was killed on June 14. It was a fulfilling experience, Pinkerton says, but "no, it does not bring closure."

Pinkerton has written a book about his dad which is soon to be published. "I constantly remind my children and grandchildren that they have a grandfather/great-grandfather. I have his picture and his flag in my office."

Hadler, too, thought it was "very important to know where

Some dads in uniform never got to know their children at all. Opposite, top: Second Lieutenant David Selby Johnson, Jr., died when he stepped on a landmine in Germany in April 1945, just a month before the war ended in Europe. His daughter, Susan, was only two and a half months old at the time. Above: When Private First Class Russell Philip Noble was drafted in February 1942, his wife was pregnant with their daughter, Phyllis. He never saw his baby; in April 1943, he died when he tripped a German booby trap in Libya.

a network for war orphans

COURTESY OF SANDRA McDUFFIE VIA WWW.AWON.ORG

Little Sandra Chichilla (also on page 25) smiles with mom and dad Helen and John in 1944. As an adult, she joined the American WWII Orphans Network. "We may have lost our dads 70, 71 years ago," she says, "but the pain still remains."

Sydney Bennett got his draft notice in the mail in May 1944. He had a wife, two children, and a widowed mother. Eleven months later, after only three days in combat, he was dead, shot by a German sniper as he entered a clearing in northern Italy.

Ann Bennett Mix was four years old when her dad died. Although she has a four-year supply of happy memories of him, they weren't enough. Her mother occasionally talked about him, but only when she'd been drinking. Mix eventually realized that not everything she learned from her mother during those times was true. "As children," she later wrote, "we [war orphans] struggled against our mothers' desire to forget and our own desire to remember."

In 1990 Mix began researching her father's life and death. Soon she figured out how to navigate the system—how to gain access to US military and government records from websites, archives, agencies, cemeteries, and museums. Along the way, she discovered that there were many other orphans on the same path. As her friend Susan Hadler wrote in *Lost in the Victory* (1998), a book she and Mix co-authored, "Nearly everyone to whom [Mix] spoke longed to know about their fathers."

The discovery led Mix to found the American WWII Orphans Network (AWON) in 1991, and AWON has been helping war orphans make connections with their lost fathers ever since. Today, profiles of 185 of those men, written by their children and other relatives, appear on the network's website, www.awon.org. And, just as important as telling the stories, war orphans have come together during their searches. "Many orphans had never met another war orphan," Mix said. "Years of isolation end as we exchange information and support within the network." Says Hadler, "I was sad until I met other war orphans in the AWON."

—Allyson Patton

Losing Dad

by Allyson Patton

STARS AND STRIPES PHOTO, COURTESY OF WILLIAM S. JACKSON

Private First Class William Jackson at the grave of Private First Class William Jackson. A 1958 Memorial Day shoot for *Stars and Stripes* let the son—in Germany with the 8th Division—visit his father's grave in Belgium's Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery.

[Dad] was buried, and then I found out there was no grave, but his name was on the Wall of the Missing in Luxembourg. So when I was 50, I finally visited the Luxembourg American Cemetery and then had a marker installed in Arlington. It was not an easy journey, but a deeply meaningful one."

To keep her father's memory alive, Hadler says, she keeps "his picture near me." And she is writing a book about her search for him. "Now that I have some sense of who he was, he is alive in me, and I think of him so very often. I visit his marker in Arlington."

Noble believes "it was *essential*" for her to visit her father's gravesite. "It's difficult to articulate exactly why, other than that I needed the closure." In 1967, after a stint volunteering with the Peace Corps in West Africa, she "flew from Nigeria to Tunisia…[and] with some help from a kind American traveler who sprang for a hired car, I was able to make my way from Tunis up to Carthage and to the American Military Cemetery. I was 24 then, the very age my father was when he was killed."

Noble keeps photographs of her father displayed "in places where I can easily see them." Each Memorial Day, she posts a homemade sign in front of her home with a photo of her dad in his uniform and a message for peace. "When I married, I kept my father's last name. My son's middle name is my father's last name."

Jackson set out to find the remaining members of his dad's 104th Division in the 1980s. After learning about the National Timberwolf Association, he joined, began attending the group's annual three-day reunions, and contacted members of his dad's unit. When he met them, they marveled at how much he resembled his father. They shared many stories about his dad, including how he had told them about the night his son was born. Jackson soaked up everything they said.

THREE TIMES NOW, Jackson has visited his dad's grave at the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery in Belgium—once in 1958 as a GI stationed in Germany and once on a trip that retraced his father's steps during the last days of his life. Jackson says that meeting and talking to all the people who knew his dad have put him at peace.

But peace isn't always the way the story ends. As Noble points out, "Beneath the military uniform is an ordinary man, somebody's son, somebody's brother, somebody's lover, somebody's father. When we kill that man (or woman) we not only take that life, but we damage the lives of all who love him.... [Surely] we can come up with an alternative to war, an alternative to sending our children out to kill other people's children...." ☆

ALLYSON PATTON *of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, has been writing articles and book reviews for* America in WWII *since the magazine's start. She is now the book and media reviews editor.*

HUNTING GERMA

NY'S WONDER JET

The Arado Blitz flew 100 mph faster than America's Mustang.
But Mustang pilot Don Bryan refused to be outclassed.
He was dead set on taking the enemy down.

by Robert F. Dorr

HUNTING GERMANY'S WONDER JET by Robert F. Dorr

CAPTAIN DONALD S. BRYAN WAS FINISHING UP a routine escort mission in his North American P-51 Mustang on March 14, 1945. He and other pilots of the US 328th Fighter Squadron were returning to Bodney, England, after helping to shepherd a group of bombers deep into Germany. Their route took them high over the Ludendorff Bridge, the vital Rhine River crossing that American troops had recently seized. From his cockpit, Bryan watched as German aircraft tried desperately to destroy it.

Then something else caught Don Bryan's eye: a German Arado Ar 234 jet bomber. Suddenly, his mission held the promise of something memorable. Ar 234s were rare, and he could count on one hand how many he'd seen. "I'm not letting one of these get away from me again," he remembered saying to himself.

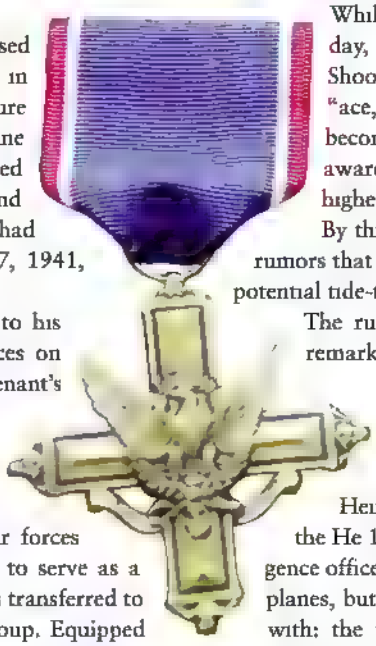
The aircraft in Bryan's sights was perhaps the most fearsome of the top secret *wunderwaffen* ("wonder weapons") that Adolf Hitler hoped would save his crumbling Third Reich. The *Luftwaffe* pilots who flew this super-fast bomber and reconnaissance plane considered it virtually invincible. But Bryan knew better. Thoughts about the jet commonly known as the Blitz had filled his mind for months.

This obsession with a jet might have surprised some people who knew Bryan back home in Holliston, California. He was laid back by nature and, he said, "not one of those who built airplane models." Yet even then he was quietly determined and earned a private pilot's license in his teens. And like millions of other American servicemen, he had been inspired to action by Japan's December 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor.

After the US Navy turned Bryan away due to his short stature, he joined the US Army Air Forces on January 6, 1942. He pinned on a second lieutenant's bars and pilot's wings on July 26 and was assigned to duty flying the Curtiss P-40 Warhawk with the 79th Fighter Squadron, 20th Fighter Group, stationed at Morris Field, South Carolina. Bryan was disappointed when the air forces sent him to Pinellas Army Air Field in Florida to serve as a flight instructor, but he got new life when he was transferred to the 328th Fighter Squadron, 352nd Fighter Group. Equipped with Republic P-47 Thunderbolts, the 352nd was sent to Bodney, England, in June 1943.

Bryan began flying missions over Europe in a P-47 he dubbed *Little One*, the first of three fighters he would name in honor of his future wife, Frances Norman. The *Luftwaffe* kept the 352nd busy, and he began to rack up aerial victories. In the spring of 1944, now a captain, he happily traded his P-47 for a new P-51 Mustang. The product of North American Aviation, this fast and nimble long-range fighter could escort bombers deep into Germany and still have the stamina to inflict considerable damage. "At high altitude the Thunderbolt performed well, but after we converted to the P-51, we had a superbly performing aircraft from 25,000 feet on down," Bryan said. The fronts of the 352nd Fighter Group's Mustangs were given a coat of bright blue paint, and the airmen and their planes came to be known as Blue Nosers.

On November 2, 1944, Bryan was flying *Little One III*, a top-of-the-line P-51D. This upgraded Mustang was quicker than his first plane and was armed with six .50-caliber machine guns. While escorting bombers to Merseburg, Germany, that day, Bryan shot down five Messerschmitt Bf 109s. Shooting down five planes gave a pilot the designation "ace," so Bryan had shot down his first plane and become an ace all in one day. For this rare feat he was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest US award for valor.



By this time, Bryan and his fellow airmen were hearing rumors that the Germans had developed the first jet aircraft, a potential tide-turner in a war the Allies seemed close to winning. The rumors were based on fact. Though most of the remarkably advanced plane prototypes designed by Germany's hard-pressed engineers would never make it into the war, Messerschmitt's Me 262 Schwalbe fighter and Me 163 Komet rocket-propelled interceptor were already operating, and Heinkel aircraft company's new jet-powered fighter, the He 162, was almost ready for action. American intelligence officers were fairly well informed about Germany's new planes, but they knew little about what Arado had come up with: the world's first jet bomber, the Ar 234. Engineer Walter Blume, who had shot down 28 planes as a WWI pilot, designed this straight-wing plane that featured a jet engine under each wing. After delays caused by engine problems, the Ar 234 V1 prototype made its first flight on June 15, 1943, at the Arado test facility at Rheine with chief test pilot Hans Selle at the controls.

The success of the Ar 234 would depend on its engine, the Jumo 004 axial flow turbojet, designed by a team headed by Anselm Franz of the Junkers aircraft company. The production version,

PREVIOUS SPREAD: US ARMY

LEFT: AUDIE MURPHY MEDALS COLLECTION, OPPOSITE: US ARMY

Previous spread: The Arado Ar 234 Blitz jet bomber (shown here at a German airfield) looked ungainly, but that hardly mattered. Few American pilots were able to catch up to it to see it up close. Above: The Distinguished Service Cross is America's second-highest award for combat valor. Mustang P-51 pilot Don Bryan received one for shooting down five German fighters on the same day, November 2, 1944. Opposite: Bryan flashes the classic squinting aviator smile alongside his P-51D *Little One III*, the last, and best, of the three fighters he christened in honor of his bride-to-be.

the 004 B-1, was powerful, rated at 1,980 pounds of thrust, but it had a life of only 10 to 25 hours. Reliability issues like this plagued the *Luftwaffe*'s desperate late-war efforts to stave off the Allies' propeller-driven hordes.

By the late summer of 1944, the Arado Ar 234 was ready. Fortunately for the Allies, it entered the skies too late to affect the invasion of German-occupied Europe launched on June 6. But an Ar 234 did spook Allied troops on the still busy beachhead at Normandy, France, on August 2. Piloting the prototype Ar 234 V7, Lieutenant Erich Sommer whizzed over the French coast at 460 miles per hour in the first reconnaissance mission ever made by a jet. Flouting Allied air supremacy in the area, Sommer used two RB 50/30 aerial cameras to take a pair of photos of Allied positions every 11 seconds. He and his shiny new aircraft escaped without a scratch.

In December 1944 Don Bryan spotted his first Blitz. He was taken aback and at first mistook it for an American Douglas A-26 Invader. Only by searching through intelligence documents and

The Ludendorff Bridge—famously known as the Bridge at Remagen—gave the US Army its first foothold in German territory, in May 1945. Its capture attracted *Luftwaffe* aircraft, including an Arado Blitz bomber, in a desperate attempt to destroy it.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

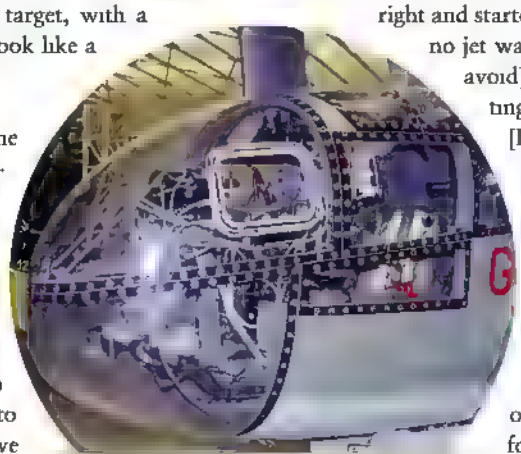
photographs afterward did he figure out what he had seen. Twice more that month he crossed paths with an Ar 234, which he discovered was an astonishingly fast plane. On the latter occasion, the German bomber flew beneath him. Bryan pursued, and nearly regretted it. "Had he wanted to, and had guns there," he recalled, "I was in a position where he could have shot me down."

Bryan spent his downtime seeking an edge. He and fellow pilots discussed ways to counter the elusive Blitz's speed with the Mustang's maneuverability and how to engage the jet in a high-speed dive. They debated the odds of catching it by surprise. The Americans had quickly gotten to know the Me 262, and by war's end, 165 pilots would be credited with shooting one down, but the Ar 234 was a different breed. It had fewer weaknesses to exploit, and it was a surprisingly small target, with a wingspan of just 46 feet (which made it look like a cigar with wings).

AFTER THREE ENCOUNTERS with the Blitz, Bryan grew increasingly determined to defeat one. "I felt that if I did everything right, I would be able to show that these guys were not invincible," he later explained. He would soon get his chance, though he would have to do so without his *Little One III*. On New Year's Day 1945, the *Luftwaffe* took to the skies over Belgium in a desperate bid to restart the *Wehrmacht*'s stalled drive through the Ardennes in the two-week old Battle of the Bulge. Hoping to catch as many enemy planes on the ground as they could, German pilots struck multiple Allied forward bases. At Asch, Belgium, where Bryan and his fellow pilots were stationed, *Luftwaffe* planes met with disaster. Two dozen fell in short order. But they did manage to destroy a single American plane on the ground: *Little One III*.

Ten weeks later, on March 14, Bryan flew a mission over the Rhine River in the P-51 *Worra Bird 3*. The plane was Lieutenant George A. Middleton's, but Bryan, as flight leader, had the option of selecting the best aircraft available. *Worra Bird 3* it was. In the air, he spotted a Blitz piloted by Captain Hans Hirschberger, who was making his combat debut. Hirschberger was a member of *Kampfgeschwader* 76 (KG 76), a *Luftwaffe* bomber outfit equipped with Ar 234s. Hirschberger was in the area as part of the German air effort to bust the Ludendorff Bridge and slow the flow of Allied forces into Germany.

Bryan kept his eyes on Hirschberger's Blitz. He watched it pull off the bridge and maneuver into a tight turn to evade a formation of P-47s. The maneuver compromised the jet's strongest asset: superior speed. Bryan positioned himself so his adversary would have to fly toward him. It was a maneuver he had carefully considered and rehearsed.



RIGHT: US ARMY ABOVE: ROBERT F DORR

Top: Restored to tip-top condition, the last surviving Arado Blitz, an Ar 234 B-2 bomber, resides in the Smithsonian's Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center in Chantilly, Virginia. Above: Don Bryan poses atop his first *Little One*, a Republic P-47 Thunderbolt.

When he was ready, Bryan dived at the Blitz and fired a burst from his Mustang's .50-caliber M2 Browning machine guns. He saw hits sparkling against the Blitz's right engine housing. It wasn't immediately obvious whether he'd disabled the engine, but now the jet was moving at a slower speed. Bryan was able to stay behind it, readjust his aim, and then open up again. "I don't know what the hell was on his mind," Bryan said of Hirschberger, "but he should have gotten out of that airplane while he was high enough. I think he was afraid I would shoot at him in his parachute, which I would never do." Having waited too long to jettison the roof hatch, Hirschberger went down with his plane.

In his encounter report, Bryan wrote, "I hit him with the first burst and knocked his right jet out. He made a shallow turn to the right and started very mild evasive maneuvers. There was no jet wash or prop wash or anything [I needed to avoid], so I squirted him. The [Blitz] was emitting much white smoke. I do not believe the [Blitz] caught fire. I finished firing [and] he rolled over on his back and dived straight into the ground and exploded. Just before hitting the ground, the pilot jettisoned his canopy, but did not get out."

Two days after Bryan's triumph, the bridge soon to be known as the Bridge at Remagen collapsed. But by then enough Americans had reached the eastern bank of the Rhine to hold their ground. Reinforcements continued to pour over pontoon bridges. Nazi Germany's final collapse was just weeks away.

Like many of Hitler's late-war superweapons, the Arado Ar 234 might have affected the war's outcome had it arrived earlier and in greater numbers. But in the end, only 224 of the 2,500 Blitzes scheduled for production were built. Today, the only surviving Blitz is the Ar 234 B-2 on display at the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center of the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum in Chantilly, Virginia.

By the time Bryan went home, he had been credited with flying 138 missions and shooting down 13.33 planes. "I always aimed at the enemy plane," not at the man in the cockpit," Bryan said. "Fact remains, I loved aviation and despised killing." The even-tempered Californian who had shown no interest in model airplanes as a young kid remained in the postwar air force, reached the rank of lieutenant colonel, and flew every American fighter through the Korean War–era North American F-86 Sabre. Robert H. Powell, who flew with Bryan in the 328th, called him "a fighter pilot's fighter pilot." ★

ROBERT F. DORR *is a US Air Force veteran who has written dozens of books on military aviation, including a history of the P-51 Mustang. This article is based in part on talks with Don Bryan, who died at age 90 in May 2012, a week after the last interview.*

SLOPPY JOE'S BAR
SMASH
40

a sailor's *Adventure* of a lifetime

Dad joined the navy eager for something new. He found it: kamikaze attacks, a deadly typhoon, the Japanese surrender ceremony. And he brought back photos to prove it.

by John E. Stanchak

SAILORS ARE A SUPERSTITIOUS LOT. So it was a matter of course that the veteran seamen aboard the newly launched US Navy destroyer *De Haven (DD-727)* worried about heading into action on a ship named after one that had recently sunk. But most of the crew were green recruits, not yet fully sensitized to the supernatural threats that spooked their elders. At least one of the boys wasn't worried at all. His view was simple: he was with "the good guys" and God was on their side. He was setting out for the adventure of a lifetime.

That sailor was my dad, John Stanchak, a 17-year-old from the western Pennsylvania steel mill town of Carnegie who had left school in the eighth grade to go to work. Nothing came of that, so once he was old enough for his father to sign a permission form for him to enlist in the military, he was off to the navy and the world war. He looked at the move mostly as his way out of town. He was eager for everything new.

The adventure began on January 9, 1944, with my dad part of a contingent of fresh boot camp graduates decked out in their dress blues and standing in formation at the Bath Iron Works in Maine. They were there to christen their new ship. A bottle of champagne was broken on the hull, and speeches were made. But for all the ceremony, there wasn't much of the hope, pride, and joy that usually accompanied the launching of a ship. Concern was in the air.

The new destroyer was a replacement for the original *De Haven*, the *De Haven (DD-469)*, launched at Bath on June 28, 1942, and sunk by Japanese aircraft off Guadalcanal eight months later. In an institutional display of pluck, the US Navy immediately laid down a frame for a new *De Haven*. After being launched, that ship headed to Bermuda on her "shakedown cruise" (trial run) and eventually followed the aircraft carrier *Ranger (CV-4)* into the Pacific.

My dad realized none of what was happening would ever be repeated, so he collected as many souvenir photographs as he could. Most of those taken early on show him and shipmates in US cities on liberty, posing in photo stands or in bars. Later shots show the *De Haven* and crew in action in the Pacific.

The *De Haven*'s war record was my dad's war record. Among his most vivid memories were fighting kamikaze aircraft, diving into the Pacific to retrieve downed American flyers, and being aboard the first US warship to enter Tokyo Bay. The most frightening recollection was of Typhoon Cobra, which hit *De Haven* and the rest of the US Third Fleet's Task Force 38 west of the Philippines in December 1944. The storm sank a number of US vessels and killed 780 American sailors

The last great memory was the last great event of the war: the Japanese surrender in September 1945. The battleship USS *Missouri* hosted the ceremony, and *De Haven* was beside her. Afterward, *De Haven* returned home. My dad went with her and was mustered out of service a combat veteran at just 19 years old.

JOHN E. STANCHAK *writes frequently for* America in WWII.

ALL PHOTOS THIS STORY JOHN STANCHAK RIGHT *AMERICA IN WWII* COLLECTION

Boys will be boys. Opposite: Two new US Navy recruits pose as hard-drinking sailors in a photographer's booth in Norfolk, Virginia, in early 1944. On the left is 17-year-old John Stanchak, and on the right, his buddy Fred Schmidt. Both were "plank owners" (members of the original crew) of USS *De Haven (DD-727)* and served aboard her from her launch through the end of the war. Both signed up for adventure and got it. Above: A wartime souvenir figurine strikes a more classic sailor pose.

a sailor's *Adventure* of a lifetime

by John E. Stanchak

Launched into war. Upper left: USS *De Haven* slides down the ways at Bath Iron Works in Maine. Above: During her dedication ceremonies in January 1944, her commander stands at center with a telescope tucked under his arm as the National Anthem plays. The guest speaker for the event is Helen De Haven (to the right of the commander), a descendant of the ship's namesake, 19th-century American naval explorer Edwin De Haven. Stanchak is among the ship's company standing around her. Upper right: Stanchak (left) and shipmates enjoy their first liberty, in Boston. Opposite: The *De Haven* fuels up in the Pacific later in the war.

a sailor's *Adventure* of a lifetime by John E. Stanchak

Pacific-bound. Above: Stanchak and shipmates, on their last liberty before leaving for the fight, take a day trip from San Diego, California, to Tijuana, Mexico. There, the kid from Pennsylvania rides the tourist city's trademark painted burro. Upper left: A Japanese bomb strikes wide of *De Haven* during combat west of the Philippines. Opposite: In December 1944, as part of Admiral William Halsey's Task Force 38, *De Haven* ran afoul of a deadly storm the US Navy labeled "Typhoon Cobra." Here, a destroyer of the same class as *De Haven* dips its bow deep into the storm's swells. The *De Haven* survived the typhoon, but other ships in its squadron sank, and 758 men were killed. The US admiralty considered the loss as bad as a battle loss. Upper right: Months later, prior to *De Haven*'s entry into Tokyo Bay, her crew practices with her 20mm and 40mm guns. *De Haven* was the first US warship to enter the bay during the war.

a sailor's *Adventure* of a lifetime by John E. Stanchak

Before and after the fighting. Opposite: In tropical white uniforms in front of a paint-and-cardboard Hawaii, Stanchak (right) and a *De Haven* shipmate pose for a portrait in 1944, before being sent into action at Ulithi Atoll. Their ship left Pearl Harbor and remained in the combat zone for much of the remainder of the war. At one point, the crew remained continuously at sea for 62 days. Above: Photographed shortly after assignment with the USS *Missouri* at the Japanese surrender ceremony, the *De Haven* shows off the scrapes and scars from her ceaseless duty during the last 21 months of the war. Upper right: A souvenir photo captures an early leave in the States. Stanchak (right) later reflected on how much had been asked of him and other boys before they were of age to vote or take a legal drink. Upper left: Flying a long "going home" banner, *De Haven* heads for the US mainland in the autumn of 1945. ★

WAR STORIES

A WWII Scrapbook

CLAM DIGGER AT THE HELM

MY FATHER, Leslie B. Dyer, Jr., finished high school in 1939 on his island home 15 miles off the coast of Maine. Coming from the commercial fishing industry, he was no stranger to the ocean. He and his brother, who was 11 months younger, enlisted in the navy three days after Pearl Harbor.

My father was in Admiral William F. Halsey's fleet [the US Third Fleet] aboard the *Lewis Hancock (DD-675)* and was low on fuel before the typhoon [Typhoon Cobra in December 1944]. They were to take on fuel from Halsey's flagship, *New Jersey (BB-62)*. The destroyer that was ahead of my father's ship [in line to fuel] could not hold station and broke the fuel lines the limit of times before being told to stop fueling. *Lewis Hancock* was next and, being the quartermaster, my father was on the wheel. He said the wind was gale-force, but they held station and were able to fuel.

Over the sound powered phone [a shipboard phone powered by the small amount of electricity generated by the vibrations of the users' voices], Halsey conveyed to the captain on the *Lewis Hancock*, "My compliments to your helmsman." The captain, who had received a verbal dressing down several days before for cutting across the *New Jersey*'s bow, forcing it into emergency reverse, saw his opportunity to get back in the admiral's good graces. He replied, "Well, admiral, you have to understand—I have a Down East clam digger on the wheel." My father received a commendation for his seamanship.

That night and the next day, the wind gauge topped 125 kph [78 mph] in wind gusts. My father's ship rolled 43 degrees. Some other destroyers and destroyer escorts rolled 70 degrees and survived. The ship ahead of my father's ship, *Spence (DD-512)*, didn't get fuel and capsized with only 24 survivors.

COURTESY OF TIMOTHY B. DYER

Maine islander and fisherman Leslie Dyer, Jr., put his seamanship to work as a typhoon chased Bull Halsey's fleet in December '44.

Sometime later in December, either at Luzon [the largest island in the Philippines] or Formosa [now Taiwan] in January 1945, my father injured his right leg badly. He suffered with that leg until 1961, when it was amputated just below his hip. Losing a limb did not slow him up, though. He lived to 81.

Timothy B. Dyer
Vinalhaven, Maine

US NAVY PARKING AUTHORITY

I JOINED THE NAVY AT Pearl Harbor. I thought they would send me back to San Diego for boat training and I'd be home in six weeks. But the navy didn't even cut my hair. Instead, I was assigned to the section base for my training [possibly Mariveles Naval Base at Mariveles, Bataan, in the Philippines].

My first position was apprentice seaman. I was messenger on the quarterdeck with a chief petty officer who had hash marks [service stripes] on his sleeve up to his elbow. My chief pointed to a car on the deck and said, "Tell that guy in the car that he is in a no parking zone."

I got on my bicycle and went over. The car had a flag on the bumper with stars on it. The officer had stars on his collar and scrambled eggs [gold embroidery, typically leaves] on the visor of his cap. I didn't salute him and instead said, "You have to move your car." He got out, put his hand on my shoulder, and said, "Son, I think it will be alright here for a while."

I agreed, gave him my best salute, and started back to the quarterdeck. But the captain's messenger stopped me and said, "Report to the captain's office." When I

AMERICA IN
WWII
LINGO!
1940s GI and civilian patter
pineapple: deceptively sweet-sounding slang for a hand grenade
dodo: like his winged but flightless namesake, this air force cadet had not flown (yet)
tiger meat: an exotic name for not-so-exotic beef

COURTESY OF BERNARD IZZO

After a thorough soak in flood water, GI Bernard Izzo's Brownie camera still managed—barely—to capture a scene at Osaka's monsoon-soaked Taisho airport.

reached the captain's office, the captain asked me what I had said to the officer. I said that I told him to move his car, as the chief had told me. The captain acted like he was gutshot. He said anyone with a rank higher than mine, you don't tell them to do anything.

Back on the quarterdeck, the chief said, "Who was that officer?" I just picked a name out of the sky and responded, "Admiral Nimitz." Chief said, "I thought it was Nimitz all along."

Robert Bridgman
wartime carpenter's mate second class, US Navy
Waynesville, North Carolina

THE MONSOON-PROOF CAMERA

During World War II, I was a member of the 98th Division. We were in the Pacific theater for two years, ending in Japan for four months of occupation.

We landed at Wakayama in September 1945. As our barracks at the Commercial University in Osaka were not ready for us, we had to pitch camp at the Taisho airport. The first several days were no problem, but on the fourth or fifth night, the monsoons came and we had about four inches of water on the ground. I woke up in my pup tent and next to me was my Brownie box camera, with film and filled with water. I poured out the water and in the morning took some pictures. When I had the film developed in Osaka several pictures did turn out.

Bernard Izzo
wartime infantryman,
Lombard, Illinois

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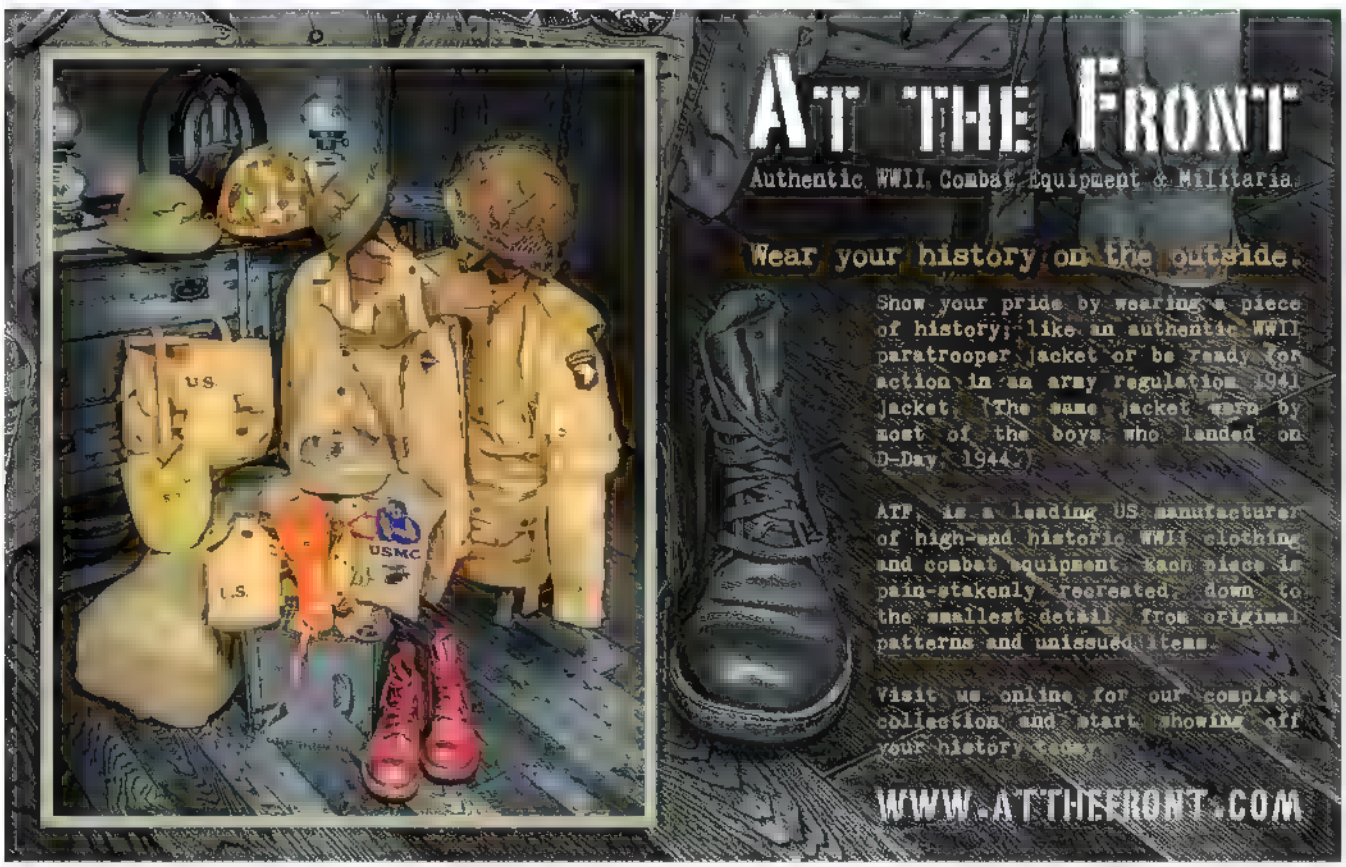
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I WAS THERE

Dogfighting through Europe

Bill Overstreet • interviewed by Garnette Helvey Bane

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

COURTESY OF THE LATE WILLIAM OVERSTREET

People who knew William Bruce "Bill" Overstreet as a neighbor or CPA were surprised to learn about his past. During World War II, he was Captain *Bill Overstreet, a Mustang pilot who engaged in many dogfights over Europe, including a spectacular one through the streets of Paris—and under the Eiffel Tower.*

Born in Clifton Forge, Virginia, on April 10, 1921, Overstreet interrupted his studies at West Virginia's Morris Harvey College to enlist in the US Army Air Forces in February 1942. Months later, he became an aviation cadet and earned his wings in a Curtiss P-40 Warhawk fighter.

Sent to Europe as a P-51 Mustang pilot with the 357th Fighter Group, Overstreet flew escort missions to protect heavy bombers on long-distance raids. In the Berlin Express*—the name he gave each Mustang he flew—he was credited with shooting down 10 enemy warplanes while flying out of Leiston, England, on missions to Scotland, Germany, Russia, Yugoslavia, and France. He was in Normandy's stormy skies on D-Day, June 6, 1944, logging 21 hours on three consecutive missions.*

I interviewed Overstreet in Roanoke, Virginia, in June 2013. Portions of the narrative below are from a 1999 interview by Scott Richardson, then a student at the University of Delaware.

Above, left: Touring a conquered Paris on June 23, 1940, Adolf Hitler pauses for a photograph in front of the Eiffel Tower. He is flanked by architect (and future armament and war production minister) Albert Speer (left) and sculptor Arno Breker (right). Above, right: Mustang fighter pilot Bill Overstreet visited the Eiffel Tower, too—flying *under* it to shoot down one of Hitler's planes.

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Anne Mason Taylor Keller, Overstreet's niece, also contributed to the article.

I WAS THERE

I HAD A LOT GOING FOR ME, but I wanted more. I was a 20-year-old attending college in Charleston, West Virginia, and working as a statistical engineer for Columbia Engineering when Pearl Harbor was bombed on December 7, 1941. Like many young men of that era, I decided to put college on hold and become a pilot in the war that was heating up in Europe.

I wanted to become a fighter pilot, but it took a little more than simply volunteering.... By February 1942, I had become a private, waiting for an opening as an aviation cadet. After several months, I was sent to Santa Ana Air Base for preflight training. Santa Ana was activated in January of 1941 and, while used for basic training, did not have planes, hangars, or runways. The nearby Western Coast Air Training Center provided our basic, primary and advanced flying training.

...After several months of preflight [instruction], I was transferred to Rankin Aeronautical Academy in Tulare, California, for primary flight training on the Stearman aircraft also known as the Model 75 Kaydet, the primary trainer aircraft for the US military during the war. The Stearman, or Boeing Stearman..., was a biplane with open cockpit. Tex Rankin, who headed the school, was a champion aerobatic pilot and demonstrated his skill frequently

Carl Aarslef, my instructor, employed unusual methods of testing his students. He surprised me one day on the downwind leg of the landing pattern, at 500 feet. He turned the Stearman upside down, cut off the engine, and said, "OK. You land it." That was easy for me. I made a quarter roll into a left turn, lined up with the runway, and set it down. I think the real test was that he was checking for my reaction. Another maneuver he required us to do was to pull the plane up into a normal stall [a position where airflow over the wings isn't enough to keep the plane aloft, and it starts to fall], "walk" the nose down [to gain speed and, thereby, lift], and then...push the nose up into an inverted stall, repeating that until the ground got closer.

Having passed that, as they say, with flying colors, I was assigned to basic training at Lemoore, California. Lemoore was built during World War II as a special training field used only in dry weather because it had a dirt field. Triangular in shape, it had everything we needed, from a PX to a gas station, a truck fill station, motor repair, underground tanks, a fire station, cadet quarters with mess hall, etc. [There, the plane we trained in was] what we referred to as the Vultee Vibrator [the Vultee BT-13 Valiant trainer] with an adjustable propeller pitch [a hydraulic system that could rotate the propeller's blades to maximize propulsion in different conditions]. We had the ability to dive down and buzz someone or something and set the prop to roar loudly over our target.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

Overstreet downed a German Fw 190 fighter over France on June 29, 1944, in a fight like this, captured by a camera on an American fighter. From the top: closing in on the 190; smoke appears; more smoke as bullets hit home; and the 190 goes down.

From there, I was assigned to advanced training at Luke Field, Arizona.... It graduated more than 12,000 fighter pilots from advanced and operational courses, earning it the name Home of the Fighter Pilot....

While there, my commanding officer indicated that I go to Williams Field for multi-engine advanced training, but I was able to convince the captain that I had to be a fighter pilot. Anyway, the AT-6 [North American AT-6 Texan], a single-engine advanced trainer aircraft, was really fun to fly, and I got to check out in the P-40 [Curtiss Warhawk], a single-engine, single-seat, all-metal fighter and ground attack aircraft, before receiving my wings.

After graduation, a group of us was assigned to Hamilton Field. During World War II, it was a West Coast air training facility whose mission was that of an initial training base for newly formed fighter groups.... The 357th Fighter Group, of which I was soon to become a member, was designated [to train] from December 1, 1942, to March 4, 1943. Among other fighter planes there [was] the P-51 Mustang, which I eventually flew in combat.

Then we went on to [become] the 357th Fighter Group, 363rd Fighter Squadron. The squadron was moved from Nevada to Santa Rosa, California. We got to fly with experienced pilots and learned a lot about the operation of the aircraft. There was enough moisture in the air to leave streamers from the wing tips in a tight turn. Our goal was to get a flight of four [planes], approach the end of the runway, peel up in a tight turn, and land before the first plane's streamers had faded.

I flew with several flight leaders, primarily with [Captain] Lloyd Hubbard. He was good.... We all thought we could buzz pretty closely, but while we may [have been] able to "mow the fairway" on a golf course, only Hubbard could "mow the greens." Hub also liked to take a flight of four to the Golden Gate Bridge and do loops around it. We were having fun! Complaints came in and charges were placed. Jack Meyers, our legal officer, told

me years later that he was able to hold up action on bushels of charges and took most home with him after the war. We buzzed farmers, sunbathers, anything. Years later, I asked [Lieutenant Colonel] Don Graham, another [pilot], why we got by with so much. He replied, "If you were picking pilots for combat, who would you pick..., the fellows who flew straight and level or the ones who pushed the envelope and tested the limits of the planes?"

[By this time, 357th Fighter Group pilots were training in Bell P-39 Airacobra fighters.] We were losing too many pilots and planes from the P-39 tumbling and going into flat spins. It happened to me in combat training on June 28, 1943. We had been practicing aerobatics when my plane started tumbling and I couldn't control it. When I released the doors, they wouldn't come off. Pressure had built up against them. I finally got my knee against one door and my shoulder against the other to overcome the pressure. When I got out, I pulled the ripcord immediately. When the parachute opened, it opened with a jerk, [and the next thing he knew he]...was standing by the propeller among cannon shells. I believe I was the first to get out of a tumbling P-39. [Overstreet kept the ripcord and later visited Hamilton Field to thank the parachute packer.]

Another day, four of us were practicing aerobatics and had reformed in formation to return to base. We saw a P-39 diving on us, so we broke as if to start combat. The P-39 started to snap-roll [like a spiraling football] right through where we had been. Later, ...[the pilot] came over saying how sorry he was. He had intended to join us, but his P-39 had other ideas....

While I was still in California, my father drove out from our home in Clifton Forge, Virginia, to bring me my 1938 Buick. I was permitted to take him for a ride in our AT-6. That was a thrill for both of us!

...It wasn't long after that that the squadron moved to Oroville, California. We were still gaining experience flying the P-39 and learning all we could. Four of us made a mistake when we decided to meet over the field from north, south, east, and west. We had planned to split S to the field [that is, change directions by nosing into a half-roll, making a half-loop while upside down, then righting the plane and leveling

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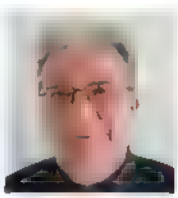

Torsten Granov, MA Director of International Military History. Has written a number of books and has lectured about WW2 and Nazi Germany. Specialist in WW2 and in D-day and Normandy.

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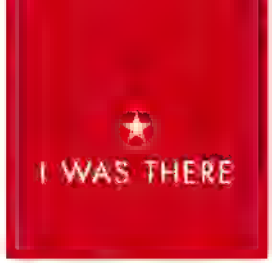

off], cross below the tower, pull up, and reform. [It turned out that a general was visiting the base that day.] Then we heard a message on the radio: "The visiting general wants the four P 39s who buzzed the tower to land immediately!" We obeyed, but chose another base to land on....

Our next move was to Casper, Wyoming. I got a short leave to take my car home and...hitched a ride in a B-24 [a Consolidated Liberator bomber] from Washington, DC, back to Wyoming....

Finally, we were declared combat-ready and transferred to Camp Shanks, New Jersey, to be shipped overseas. Although we were supposed to be confined to the base, we managed to get to a nightclub in New York City. Soon, though, we boarded the *Queen Elizabeth* to cross the Atlantic. I remember [Lieutenant] Bill "Obee" O'Brien kicking his B-4 bag [a two-suiter garment bag] up the gangplank. He had suffered a .45 wound in the arm in an accident....

Obee O'Brien, a P-51 Mustang fighter pilot [and ace], was a great guy with whom to be in combat. He downed six enemy aircraft and won four Distinguished Flying Crosses. During his service with the 357th Fighter Group's 363rd Squadron [Overstreet's unit], O'Brien helped train Chuck Yeager, who went on to break the sound barrier. Yeager and O'Brien were fast friends. On March 5, 1944, O'Brien and Yeager were piloting P-51s escorting B-24 bombers over France when Yeager's plane was shot down. [French Maquis resistance fighters helped Yeager reach Spain. Making his way to England, he resumed flying.] I flew wing with Yeager at one point.

[When our group arrived in Great Britain,] we landed in Scotland and went on to Raydon [Airfield], in the Ninth Air Force. When we arrived, all we saw was mud—no planes.... In all that mud, we were required to dress for dinner. War is hell! By then, P-51s were becoming more readily available, and the Eighth Air Force wanted them for long-range escort. So we were traded to the Eighth for a P-47 outfit at Leiston [in eastern Suffolk, England].

After settling in at Leiston, there was more pavement and less mud. We started getting P-51s. What a great day that was! I got to fly a P-51 for the first time on January 30, 1944.... It seemed they hoped for us to get at least 10 hours in the new plane before combat.

On February 8, 1944, Lloyd Hubbard flew with another group to get some combat time. Unfortunately, ...while flying over Belgium, Hub was shot by anti-aircraft guns located around the Florennes Airfield.... He died on board his P-51 mustang, which crashed in [the] village [of] Stave....

[After that,] I flew with several until I flew as "tail-end Charlie" [a formation's last plane] with [triple ace Captain Clarence E. "Bud"] Anderson. From then on, I tried to fly with him whenever possible. I thought then, and still do, that he was the greatest....

I named my first plane *Southern Belle*. However, a few weeks later, when another pilot was flying it, he failed to return. By then, it was early March, and we had started

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going to Berlin on a regular basis, so I named the rest of my planes *Berlin Express*.

On March 6, just after the first Berlin raid [on March 4, first in a string of raids designed to force Germany's air force into damaging combat], the 357th showed what our training and teamwork could do.... Our first citation stated:

The newly operational 357th Fighter Group provided target and withdrawal support to heavy bombardment aircraft bombing Berlin, which was the deepest penetration of single-engine fighters to that date. The 33 P-51 aircraft went directly to Berlin and picked up the first formations of B-17s just before their arrival over the city. They found the bombers being viciously attacked by one of the largest concentrations of twin-engine and single-engine fighters in the history of aerial warfare.

From 100 to 150 single-engine and twin-engine fighters, some firing rockets, were operating in the immediate target area in groups of 30 to 40 as well as singly. Each combat wing of bombers was being hit as it arrived over Berlin and although they were sometimes outnumbered as much as 6 to 1, flights and sections of the 357th Group went to aid each combat wing as it arrived over the target, providing support in the air for over 30 minutes.

Upwards of 30 enemy aircraft at a time were attacked by these separate flights and sections, and driven away from above and below the bombers. Some of the P-51s left their formations to engage enemy fighters below the bomber level in order to prevent them from reforming for further attacks. Though fighting under the most difficult conditions and subjected to constant anti-aircraft and enemy aircraft fire, so skillfully and aggressively were their attacks on the enemy fighters carried out that not a single aircraft of the 357th was lost.

In driving enemy fighters away from the

NATIONAL ARCHIVES

A formation of Mustang fighters flies above the clouds. After piloting all sorts of trainers and unruly P-39 Airacobras during his training, Overstreet was thrilled to find himself in a Mustang when he reached his first combat base in England.

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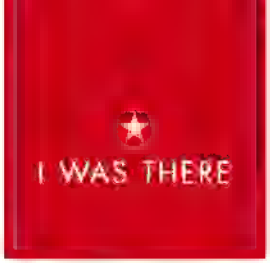

bombers, 20 Nazi fighters were destroyed, one probably destroyed and seven others damaged. On withdrawal, one flight of five P-51s strafed a large enemy airfield in central Germany, damaging three twin-engine and single-engine aircraft on the ground and killing 15–20 armed personnel before regaining altitude and returning to the bombers.

Not long after this, I had a freak accident. I think it was a mission to Southern France. While over enemy territory, a burst of flak cut my oxygen line. Since I was at about 25,000 feet, I soon passed out. The next thing I knew, I was in a spin, the engine dead, since the fuel tank it was mounted on was dry. Somehow, I recovered from the spin, changed the fuel setting, got the engine started, and dodged the trees that were right in front of me. Then I looked at my watch. Ninety minutes were not in my memory.

I had no idea where I was, but remembered where I had been headed, so I reversed it. I was able to find the coast of France and headed for Leiston. By this time, I was low on fuel, so I landed at the 4th [Fighter] Group base. The officer with whom I talked was Captain Mead, who had lived a couple blocks from my home in Clifton Forge. To top it off, the mechanic who repaired my plane was "Hot Cha" Tucker, a former schoolmate who was also from my hometown. Many weeks later, this story got a lot of publicity—Lowell Thomas on radio, newspapers, and *Time* magazine.

During this period I flew more with Anderson, while [First Lieutenant Charles K.] Peters and [Lieutenant Herschel] Pascoe flew with [ace Captain] Jim Browning. My crew chief was "Red" Dodsworth with "Whitey" McKain his assistant. Whitey and I became good friends despite one incident on a snowy day. The visibility was so limited that Whitey was riding my wing to the runway. At the runway, I motioned Whitey to get off, but he thought I wanted him to come to the cockpit. I watched Andy [Captain Anderson], and he gave it the gun to take off, so I did the same. Poor Whitey was blown off the wing, but wrapped up so well he wasn't hurt.

Another mission that didn't turn out well was when I had a sinus infection. When we chased the German fighters out of position to attack the bombers, if most of them had dived away from us, we would sometimes chase them down. This time, I was chasing a 109 [a Messerschmitt Bf 109 fighter, which most US pilots called an "Me 109"] in a power dive from about 30,000 feet. Suddenly, my eyes were swollen shut. I was able to keep flying by feel (the pressure on the controls). I called for help and "Daddy Rabbit" Peters said he could see me. [*Daddy Rabbit* was Peters's P-51.] He got on my wing, took me back to the base, and talked me through a straight-in approach and landing. It was days before doctors could relieve the pressure and I could see again.

June 6 [1944] was the Normandy invasion. We took off about 2 A.M. in horrible

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weather. We had to climb about 20,000 feet to get out of the overcast. Once we were on top, it was beautiful. The moon was bright, and as planes would break out of the overcast, they were in different altitudes from the long climb [flying blind] on instruments. We never did find our assigned flights, just formed up in flights of four. We went to France to make sure that no German fighters could bother the invasion and to prevent reinforcements from being brought up. After six hours, we came back to the base to refuel. The group flew eight missions on the day of the invasion.

The next day, Anderson, [Captain Edward K.] Simpson, [First Lieutenant John R.] Skara, and I strafed trains, trucks, and military vehicles. On June 10, the group claimed trains, rail shacks, boxcars, trucks, lorries, and barges.

June 29 was a good day. I got behind an FW 190 [a Focke-Wulf fighter], and when I started getting hits, he flipped over and bailed out. I used only 40 rounds the whole day. General Kepner issued another com-

Oxygen Out, Pilot Flies 90 Minutes With Mind a Blank

AN EIGHTH MUSTANG BASE, May 23—For an hour and a half, 1/Lt. William B. Overstreet Jr., a P51 pilot from Clifton Forge, Va., flew his Mustang fighter over enemy territory and didn't know a thing about it, his mind a perfect blank.

Flying into France, Overstreet's oxygen system failed at 22,000 feet. His plane dropped out of formation and his squadron leader couldn't reach him over the radio. For 90 minutes the Virginian, subconscious from lack of oxygen, apparently flew his plane by reflex action alone and only regained his senses when the ship slipped into a spin, the denser air at 7,000 feet reviving him in time to recover and fly home.

At the hospital, where flight surgeons said he was all right for combat again, it was explained that Overstreet must have dropped from 22,000 feet for his 90 minutes of blank flying, because he probably would have died in the rarified atmosphere of that altitude without oxygen.

STARS AND STRIPES

Flying unconscious for 90 minutes over France without crashing earned Overstreet an article in the army's *Stars and Stripes* newspaper on May 24, 1944.

The Major's War: Worth Fighting For
By E M Owsiany

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mendation for the 357th and 361st Groups. [Major General William E. Kepner headed the Eighth Fighter Command, which escorted Eighth Air Force bombers.] We destroyed 48 enemy aircraft without losing a single bomber.

On July 29, I chased a 109 to the deck and had a wing in the grass when he blew up. He must have been trying to get to his base because we were close to a German airfield. My wingman, [First Lieutenant] Harold Hand, and I made a pass and destroyed another 109 and damaged a Do 217 [a Dornier bomber]. I went back and got another 109, but I found that I was alone. I asked Hand where he was and he replied, "I am giving you top cover."

COURTESY OF THE LATE WILLIAM OVERSTREET

Overstreet (with pipe) chats with flyers and ground crewmen next to his pride and joy, *Berlin Express*, one of a few Mustangs by that name that he flew in the war. His first P-51, *Southern Belle*, went missing while being flown by another pilot.

We had one escort mission out of Russia. This gave enough time in Russia to find some beet vodka. We thought it was better than potato vodka and decided we should take some with us. I offered to leave my ammunition behind to make space for the vodka. That was fine until we ran into some 109s on our way to Italy. Naturally, we went after them, but they ran away. However, ...the last one...rolled over and bailed out. Because I was the closest plane, I could have claimed another 109, but I did not want to claim the only enemy plane destroyed with vodka! Now all I had to worry about was to make a smooth landing in Italy to safeguard my precious cargo.

I had many exciting missions. On one, a 109 blew up when I was too close. Pieces of the 109 came into my cockpit and landed in my lap. On another, I saw a 109 in a shallow dive after the pilot bailed out, crashing into the side of a factory.... The engine came out the other side of the building, sliding down the street. On still another mission, a cannon shell came through the side of my canopy. It took the canopy, oxygen mask, [and] helmet, [and] gave me a haircut and a bad burn on my neck.

On another mission in '44, I was captured by the Nazis in Germany [after bailing out, but] managed to escape and ran into the woods. Knowing I had to get the heck out of Germany, I made my way into France, and the French underground helped me by contacting the Americans and telling them where I was hiding. An American pilot came, picked me up, and we went back to the base. Once we were back at the base, we suited up and were off on our next mission.

Perhaps my most exciting wartime event happened in August 1944. My Mustang stayed hot on the tail of a Messerschmitt Me 109G over Paris. Obviously, the German pilot flew over Paris anticipating that the heavy German anti-aircraft artillery would solve his problem and eliminate me. We had a running dogfight, and I got some hits at about 1,500 feet. I was flying my P-51C, the *Berlin Express*.

The German's engine was hit and I persisted through the intense enemy flak. As a last resort, the Me 109 pilot aimed his aircraft at the Eiffel Tower and, in a breathtaking maneuver, flew beneath it. Unshakeable, I followed him underneath, scoring several more hits in the process. The German plane crashed several blocks away, and I escaped the heavy flak around Paris by flying low and full throttle over the river. When asked what I was thinking when I flew under the tower, my comment has always been, "I'm not sure. I was a little busy."

BILL OVERSTREET RETURNED *to the States in October 1944 to become an aerial gunnery instructor in Pinellas, Florida. Once released from active duty, he went to work as general manager of Charleston Aviation in Charleston, West Virginia. He finished his education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and the University of Virginia and, in 1950, moved to Roanoke, Virginia, working as a CPA until 1984.*

More than 60 years after World War II, Overstreet "flew his last mission over Europe," returning to Great Britain to visit Leiston Airfield, catch up with Captain Anderson, and even sit down with two German WWII pilots.

*On December 8, 2009, at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia, French ambassador Pierre Vimont invested Overstreet as a Knight of the Legion of Honor (*Chevalier de la Légion d'honneur*), an award created by Napoleon to acknowledge service rendered to France.*

Overstreet died on December 29, 2013, six months after my interview with him. ★

GARNETTE HELVEY BANE *is principal of Garnette Bane and Associates, a marketing and public relations agency in Greenville, South Carolina.*

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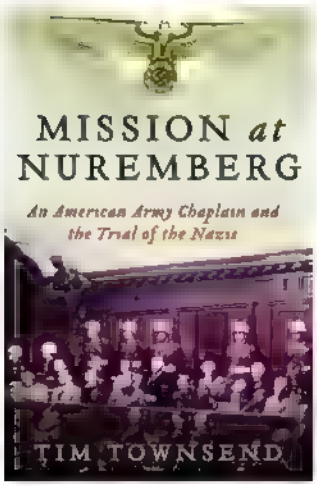

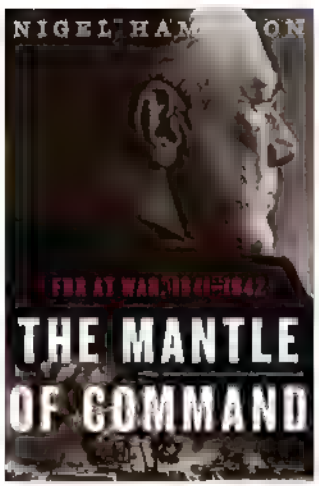

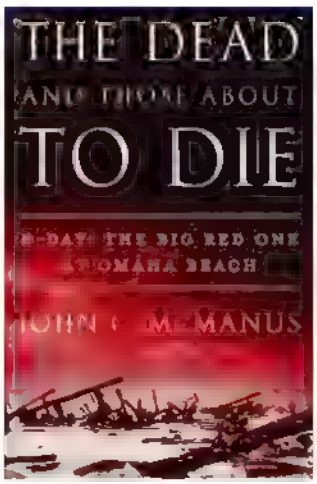

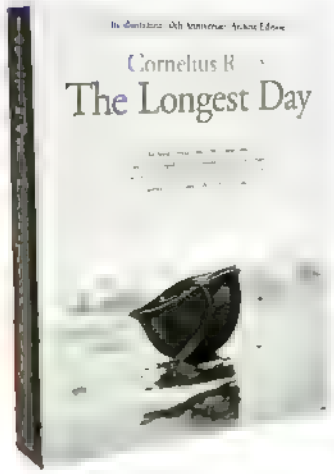

Mission at Nuremberg: An American Army Chaplain and the Trial of the Nazis
by Tim Townsend, William Morrow, 400 pages, $28.99

IN *MISSION AT NUREMBERG*, author Tim Townsend relates how, at the request of the US Army, a middle-aged American Lutheran minister attended to the spiritual needs of 21 high-ranking Nazi prisoners of war during their war crimes trials at Nuremberg. Those defendants included *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring, weapons and war production head Albert Speer, Field Marshall Wilhelm Keitel, and Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop. Captain Henry Gerecke, Townsend writes, was to "kneel down with the architects of the Holocaust and calm their spirits as they answered for their crimes in front of the world."

Article 16 of the Geneva Convention of 1929, regarding treatment of POWs, stipulates that prisoners are to have "complete freedom in the performance of their religious duties" and allows for fellow prisoners who are ministers "freely to minister to their co-religionists." However, says Townsend, in Nuremberg during the days following Germany's surrender, allowing captured German chaplains to intermingle with prisoners who once composed Adolf Hitler's highest echelon was out of the question.

The only alternative was to provide chaplains from the US Army. So, in the fall of 1945, Colonel Burton Andrus, commander of the Nuremberg prison, requested Gerecke. His choice was logical. Many of the POWs were Lutheran, Gerecke spoke German, and he had a history and a passion for ministering to the downtrodden. In 1935 he had announced to his family that they would leave their comfortable St. Louis vicarage, with its stable salary and housing, and move to an apartment in the city, where he could better minister to the poor, old, insane, sick, abandoned, and criminal. It was work that he was already doing during his free time, as he had become bored with ministering to those who were already Christians. Townsend writes that Gerecke was more interested in "the city's wounded, those who were at risk of dying without hearing God's message of love for them."

Once Gerecke was installed as chaplain at Nuremberg, some prisoners found comfort in his ministrations. One was Keitel, and during the year of the trial, he and Gerecke became friends. Others, such as Deputy Fuhrer Rudolf Hess, politely but firmly refused Gerecke's efforts. Göring played the middle. Though he rejected any authority of Jesus Christ as savior, as the date for his execution grew closer, he asked Gerecke to give him Holy Communion. The chaplain could not do that in good conscience, considering that faith in Christ is a requisite for Communion. It was a moment Gerecke had dreaded, yet he remained firm even as Göring insisted. Göring hated the idea of the gallows, and in the end he cheated his executioners, committing suicide with a cyanide capsule just hours before he was scheduled to hang. Afterward, Gerecke wrote in his chaplain report that if Göring had been "sincere in his quest for Christ and Salvation, he would not have gone the way he did." Even so, Gerecke later wondered if he had been too rigid and had failed Göring.

Ironically, it was this kind of self-doubt that made Gerecke perfect for the job. Townsend writes that the Nazis killed 11 million noncombatants. Six million of those were killed just for being Jewish. Gerecke took the experience from his city mission years with him to Nuremberg, where, says Townsend, he made a conscious choice to remember that before their alliance with Adolf Hitler and before all the atrocities that followed, the defendants "had all been boys once...."

Hans Fritzsche, who was on trial as Hitler's radio propaganda chief, later said, "Pastor Gerecke's view was that in his

domain God alone was Judge, and the question of earthly guilt therefore had no significance so far as he was concerned. His only duty was the care of souls..., a battle for the souls of men standing beneath the shadow of the gallows."

Ten high-ranking Nazi officials were executed and one committed suicide as a result of that first, historic war crimes trial. Townsend writes that Gerecke was convinced they "were 'men of intelligence and ability' who, in different circumstances, could have been 'a blessing to the world instead of a curse.'"

In *Mission at Nuremberg*, Townsend sheds light on a little-known player in an iconic episode of world history. With extensive and varied sources and thorough research behind it, the book is a well-written study about a subject matter that can't help but hold a reader's attention. It sparks the age-old debate about evil that will continue to rage until the end of time. It also subliminally reinforces the idea that no one can truly know the condition of another's soul. That remains privileged information, reserved exclusively for every individual and his or her maker.

ALLYSON PATTON
book and media reviews editor

The Mantle of Command: FDR at War, 1941–1942
by Nigel Hamilton, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 528 pages, $30

TYPICALLY, WHEN WE consider American grand strategy in World War II, we think of the top brass: Admirals Ernest King and Chester Nimitz, and Generals George Marshall, Douglas MacArthur, and Dwight Eisenhower. President Franklin Roosevelt, while decisive in his summits with British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin, seems to have been less involved in charting the military course for his country, let alone for the alliance. Accomplished historian Nigel Hamilton takes issue with this.

In *The Mantle of Command*, Hamilton portrays a very interventionist president who rapidly assumed the primary role in directing strategy, quickly supplanting Churchill as the premier Allied war leader. This careful, attentive, broad reading traces how Roosevelt maneuvered himself into a dominant position: supplanting Churchill as early as the pre-Pearl Harbor Placentia Bay summit of 1941, committing to a "Germany first" war aim, supporting Lieutenant Colonel James "Jimmy" Doolittle's April 1942 Tokyo Raid (which his secretary of war had opposed), and even overruling his secretary of war and joint chiefs of staff to set a 1942 goal for landing in Axis-held North Africa.

The tumultuous tone of the Roosevelt-Churchill relationship will surprise some readers. Yet Hamilton provides solid sources, going far outside official accounts to diaries, private correspondence, and narratives by tangential players. Thus the account relating Britain's loss of nerve in the face of possible Japanese incursions into the Indian Ocean comes not from Churchill's writings, which completely skip this flustered episode, but from the diaries of the visiting Canadian prime minister. More broadly, we learn, as Roosevelt assumed the dominant position in the partnership, he pressured Churchill to commit to independence for India for strategic and moral reasons. Churchill demurred and undermined efforts to negotiate such an agreement.

Early in the war, in 1942, American and British planners had advocated a cross-Channel assault to directly challenge Berlin. Roosevelt balked and pushed his military leaders to investigate landing in North Africa instead (later known as Operation Torch). Hamilton's explanation for this is remarkable. He argues that after the British debacle at Tobruk, Libya, which ended with the port city falling to the Germans on June 21, 1942, after a siege, Roosevelt realized the Germans had been too well equipped for the British and had outgeneraled them, too. There was no intrinsic reason to believe American troops would fare better. This motivated him to push for an attack at a venue of the Allies' choosing, where the Axis would have no advantage. This, in turn, led inexorably to North Africa. His joint chiefs adamantly opposed this—Marshall derided it as merely entertaining the public—but Roosevelt exerted presidential authority. A disastrous raid on Dieppe, France, in August 1942 confirmed that the Allies were unready even for simple cross-Channel operations. Roosevelt had been right.

Furthermore, while the British initially believed that their years of fighting the Germans had earned them seniority, Hamilton maintains that Roosevelt had a more balanced view. He saw not only the British's dogged survival in the May-June 1940 evacuation of Dunkirk, France, and in the Battle of Britain that summer and fall, but also their consistent failure in Norway, France, and Greece, at Hong Kong, Singapore, and Tobruk. In the latter two cases, British armies had surrendered without even fighting. Roosevelt, Hamilton argues, concluded that if the British military wasn't willing to fight for its empire, why should the Americans?

Roosevelt had a genius for manipulating outcomes and, as *The Mantle of Command* contends, there was no finer wartime example than his actions to ensure that Operation Torch went forward. Because the war secretary and joint chiefs were vehemently opposed to a North African invasion, instead advocating a Pacific campaign first, Roosevelt dispatched them to London to meet their British counterparts and discuss future action. He sent trusted aide Harry Hopkins along to make sure they ended up on the "Germany first" script. Then, while the chiefs were out of the country, he recruited Admiral William Leahy to a new post, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff. Leahy would manage the chiefs on Roosevelt's behalf, thus presenting them with a bureaucratic *fait accompli* on their return.

Other familiar aspects of Roosevelt's style emerge in the book, too, such as his preference for decisive actors, seen in his celebration of MacArthur. Although MacArthur had questionable financial dealings with Luzon, he inspired his men to fight, and to Roosevelt, that made him a winner. Roosevelt tolerated almost anything as long as it led to victory.

The Mantle of Command is an extremely rewarding read. Hamilton has researched far and wide, and he successfully balances the intricacies of global war with those of national politics. While he masters a large cast of characters, he never loses focus on Roosevelt, Churchill, the American military

leadership, and selected characters in the field. It stands alone as an excellent book, but leaves one hungry for the next volume.

THOMAS MULLEN
Flemington, New Jersey

The Dead and Those About to Die: D-Day—The Big Red One at Omaha Beach
by John C. McManus, NAL Caliber, 384 pages, $27.95

ANY STUDENT OF the Normandy landings should know John C. McManus, professor of history and political science at the Missouri Institute of Science and Technology. McManus wrote extensively on the Normandy invasion, including the D-Day landings of June 6, 1944, in his 2004 two-part series *The Americans at D-Day: The American Experience at the Normandy Invasion* and *The Americans at Normandy: The Summer of 1944—The American War from the Normandy Beaches to Falaise.*

Both books follow the trajectory of US forces during the landings and capture the larger picture of one of the riskiest and most ambitious military operations in history. But the *Americans at Normandy* books are history writ large. In his latest book, *The Dead and Those About to Die*, McManus focuses his spotlight more tightly, on the 1st Infantry Division.

By D-Day the 1st Infantry Division was already a veteran unit, with landings in North Africa and Sicily under its belt. But the division's salty commander, Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen, and deputy division commander, Brigadier General Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., were relieved of command by Lieutenant General Omar Bradley, their corps commander at the time, who thought their command style improper. Major General Clarence R. Huebner, a highly decorated veteran with extensive combat experience with the 1st Division during World War I, received the unenviable task of not only assuming command from its two popular leaders, but also preparing the division for the Normandy landings.

The Dead and Those About to Die returns Huebner to Normandy's Calvados Coast and the desperate battle to invade German-occupied France. The book's title

★ THEATER OF WAR

What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?
Directed by Blake Edwards, written by William Peter Blatty, starring James Coburn, Dick Shawn, Sergio Fantoni, Giovanna Ralli, Harry Morgan, Carroll O'Connor, 1966, 119 minutes, color, not rated.

What Did You Do in the War, Daddy? comes burdened with one of those jokey titles that were prevalent in the 1960s. Unfortunately, like the title, the movie is never quite as funny as it thinks it is—not that it doesn't try hard. Neither director Blake Edwards (the *Pink Panther* movies) nor script writer William Peter Blatty (*The Exorcist*) seem to be firing on all cylinders in this widescreen service comedy, which often teeters on the edge of funny without quite falling in.

The setting is Italy. General Bolt (Carroll O'Connor, sporting some seriously fake eyebrows) assigns uptight, by-the-book Major Lionel Cash (Dick Shawn) to take a run down company of misfits and liberate the Italian village of Valerno. Aided by diplomatic coaching from the breezy Lieutenant Christian (James Coburn, who supposedly based much of his performance on director Edwards), the out-of-his-depth Cash makes a good start. The Italian soldiers in the town, led by Captain Oppo (Sergio Fantoni) are more than willing to surrender, but only if Cash lets them hold the town's annual festival that night. Urged on by Christian, Cash reluctantly agrees. He soon wishes he hadn't. The Americans get swept up by the high spirits and plentiful wine. Cash himself finally succumbs to the charms of the bottle and Oppo's girl (Giovanna Ralli). Outraged when he learns of the betrayal, Oppo reneges on his promise to surrender.

Things really start to go south for Cash with the arrival of American intelligence officer Pott (Harry Morgan). The ever-resourceful Christian persuades both sides to wage a mock battle to hoodwink Pott. Naturally, this doesn't quite go according to plan. Pott ends up lost in the maze of catacombs beneath the town, gradually losing his marbles, and aerial reconnaissance photos of the fake fighting make Bolt think it's time to call in an airstrike and flatten Valerno.

The film gets a narrative boost when the Germans show up. Seeing the capture of the town as a chance to flank the Allies in Sicily, Adolf Hitler orders in an armored division. The Germans capture both the Italian and the American soldiers. Hijinks invariably ensue as the prisoners take advantage of a tunnel into the catacombs and slip away into the night. The situation also leads to the kind of cross-dressing humor Edwards would mine more successfully later in *Victor/Victoria*, when Cash disguises himself as a woman and unexpectedly becomes the target of a libidinous

paraphrases the famous observation made by one of the division's officers, Colonel George Taylor. After wading ashore amid the tangled, bloody mess of bodies on the beach, Taylor rallied soldiers trapped by German fire, telling them only the "dead and those who are going to die" could stay on the beach. The men pushed inland and secured a foothold. The Big Red One in the book's subtitle is the nickname given the 1st Division for its simple but highly recognizable shoulder patch.

In his foreword, McManus explains his motivation for writing the book and discusses previous works, noting that the 1st Division's role is often lost amid the almost overwhelming size of D-Day's Allied force. He even admits that his previous work devoted only enough space to weave the 1st Division's role into the overall amphibious invasion. But Normandy was a *huge* operation with *lots* of stories to tell, and he intended no slight to the division. In *The Dead and Those About to Die*, he states that the history he wishes to share is simply that the 1st Infantry Division's part of the assault on bloody Omaha was arguably the most difficult and dangerous of the Normandy landings.

McManus approaches his writing as an academic, with careful, reasoned use of his "strikingly rich blend of sources." He certainly achieves this in an accomplished manner. The coupling of those sources with his accessible and readable narrative produces a book that any student of the Normandy invasion will find informative, useful, and instructive. Those sources include after-action reports, combat interviews, letters, diaries, oral histories, and a plethora of other resources that give the reader not only the official narrative of the action, but also the stories from the soldiers and sailors who hit the beaches

McManus states that his desire is to research questions about Omaha Beach that he believes—and I agree with him—stand out. He lays these questions out in the foreword as a guide to the trajectory of his book. Within this framework he provides insights on leadership within the division, the actions of veterans compared to those of replacements, and the effect of the division's actions on the invasion as a whole. The reliance of American forces on technology simply did not apply that day, he writes; it was the bravery and effective leadership of the officers and men of the Big Red One that brought victory

The narrative moves chronologically, following the division's camps in England, through the rigorous training and on to the landings. The sequence of events moves at a fast pace, and McManus presents combat action in all its heartbreaking, horrifying, and yet inspiring grandeur.

MICHAEL EDWARDS
New Orleans, Louisiana

German officer. Although the movie never jettisons comedy, during this last part of the movie, the sense of a genuine threat from the occupying Germans introduces an element of comedic tension that keeps things interesting.

Unfortunately, the whole thing never quite gels and *What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?* ends up provoking more smiles than guffaws and seems more frantic than funny. It *looks* pretty good, though, with Southern California providing a decent stand in for Italy. The opening scenes of American troops moving through the countryside may make some audience members wish the movie had stuck with straight combat. But the movie never becomes subversive enough to serve as satire or provide enough laughs to work as farce. Still, it has its defenders. In a book about Edwards, Sam Wasson wrote, "One of the greatest tragedies of Blake Edwards' career (and there are many) is that *What Did You Do in the War, Daddy?* has fallen into obscurity."

—TOM HUNTINGTON
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

The Longest Day: The Illustrated 70th Anniversary Archive Edition
by Cornelius Ryan, Barron's,
256 pages, $59.99

ALTHOUGH "D-DAY" IS a generic military term for the scheduled start date of a military operation, the scope and singular importance of the Normandy Invasion made it inevitable that the term would be inextricably linked to the events of June 6, 1944, from then on. When applied to Normandy, however, that simple label—with both Ds capitalized to make it D-Day—covers an operation executed at a scale almost impossible to imagine. It was the largest seaborne invasion in history. It was also a decisive Allied victory resulting in a slender foothold on the Western European mainland, which was, except for neutral nations and a portion of Italy, entirely controlled by Germany.

Hundreds of books have been written about D-Day. *The Longest Day* by Cornelius Ryan is justifiably considered one of the best. First published in 1959, it was an immediate success. Ryan's unique approach to researching the story and his skill in telling it ensured the book's status as a classic. The new *Illustrated 70th Anniversary Archive Edition* published by Barron's Educational Series repackages the *The Longest Day* in a large, 9.5- by 12-inch hardback format with an attractive slipcase. This special edition features 100 photographs from D-Day. And bound inside are envelopes containing reproductions of 30 source documents Ryan used while writing. There's also a CD with some of Ryan's recorded interviews, including two with Supreme Allied Commander Dwight Eisenhower.

The research information gives a behind-the-scenes peek at how Ryan gathered the material for his book. He was a journalist who covered D-Day for *The Daily Telegraph* in London, and he brought that perspective to writing *The Longest Day*. After the war, he immigrated to the United States, where he wrote for *Time* and *Collier's* magazines. When *Collier's* folded in 1956, he put his full attention to writing a history of D-Day, something he had wanted to do for a decade. He teamed up with *Reader's Digest* for research assistance to write an everyman's history of the event. He put classified advertisements in newspapers and magazines in the United States, Canada, Great Britain, France, and Germany, asking people to provide anecdotes and fill out questionnaires relating their experiences.

In the introduction to this new anniversary edition, Douglas McCabe, curator of the Cornelius Ryan Archive, states that Ryan made contact with 1,144 people.

"Through them," writes McCabe, "he collected 969 questionnaires, 172 interviews, 18 accounts, and 7 diaries." Ryan recorded 125 interviews, procured official documents, telephone logs, messages, and intelligence reports, some of which were declassified for his use. And, of course, he consulted other published works on the subject. He keyed all the accounts to maps of the area and situated them within the day's timeline. Every fact in the book was thoroughly researched and documented. This edition features maps and illustrations that show where and when the included reproduction documents are relevant to the story.

Ryan's skill as a writer weaves all the different voices together into a complete account of the invasion, divided into three parts in the book: the wait, the night, and the day. In each scene, anecdotes from several people combine to describe the same events from different perspectives. For example, part two, "The Night," opens with Madame Levrault, a French school mistress in the village of Sainte-Mère-Église, being awakened by flares in the distance and heading out into her garden. There, Private Robert Murphy, an 82nd Airborne Division pathfinder, landed just yards away from her. Meanwhile, Ryan relates stories from other pathfinders, one of whom nearly shot a cow that bore down on him after he landed. He then switches perspectives to a German captain in the 352nd Division who was startled by the noise from the pathfinders' planes, put his boots on the wrong feet, and ran outside just in time to take a shot at two paratroopers in the distance.

We meet Madame Levrault again in chapter four. She quietly pulls the town's mayor aside while townspeople battle a fire, to tell him about the American paratrooper in her garden—right before more 82nd troopers land in the village amid the fire and amid German soldiers stationed there. One man, Private John Steele, famously got hung up on the town's church steeple and played dead during the bloody skirmish between the paratroopers and the Germans. All of this was in the first hours of the pre-invasion parachute drop.

Ryan presents stories from German defenders, French resistance workers, civilians, soldiers, sailors, and airmen from each nation without judgment, skillfully combining them to make each scene and event vibrantly alive. The extra material provided in this special anniversary edition complements Ryan's terrific prose, making this version of *The Longest Day* well worth owning

DREW AMES
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

★ 78 RPM

A Dark Path to the Spotlight

THINGS LOOKED BLEAK for Helen Forrest early on. Her father died while she was still in the womb. Her mother eventually remarried and turned the place where they lived in Brooklyn into a brothel. When Forrest was 14, her stepdad tried to rape her. Things got better when her mother responded by letting her go to live with her piano teacher. Once the teacher heard Forrest singing around the house, piano lessons gave way to vocal lessons. A star was being born the hard way.

Before long, Forrest was knocking on the doors of music business executives. In 1934, 17 years old, she got her first steady singing job, for a local radio show. Over the next several years, she landed highly coveted jobs with the big bands led by Artie Shaw and Benny Goodman. She quit Goodman in August 1941 "to avoid having a nervous breakdown," she said, going on to describe him as "one of the most unpleasant men I ever met."

By this time, Forrest was well established and could set some of her own terms for her next job. One of them was that she wanted the spotlight. Heeding that, Harry James hired her to front his orchestra. The traditional role of big band singer as just another band member changed almost overnight.

Forrest's mastery of ballads was a perfect fit for James, and she remained with him into 1943, recording the popular "I Don't Want to Walk without You" and "I Had the Craziest Dream." In both of her James years, the readers of the jazz magazine *Down Beat* voted her best female vocalist. Along the way, Forrest fell for James. "I never married Harry," she later said, "but he was the love of my life."

Forrest followed the trend of singers leaving their bands to go solo, as Frank Sinatra and others had done. She made her first solo record, "Time Waits for No One," in mid-1944, but most of her wartime work was duets with Dick Haymes. Their hits, including 1944's "Long Ago and Far Away" and 1945's optimistic "I'll Buy That Dream," tugged at the heartstrings of couples separated by war. They recorded 18 duets into 1946, and 10 of them charted in the top 10.

Like many forties artists, Forrest began to disappear in the shadow of fifties rock and roll acts. By that time, however, she had plenty to show for her career. "The most dramatic moments of my life were crammed into a couple of years from the fall of 1941 to the end of 1943," she later said. "...That was when the music of the dance bands was the most popular music in the country, and I was the most popular female band singer in the country...."

—CARL ZEBROWSKI
editor of *America in WWII*

WWII EVENTS

COLORADO • **Aug. 9–10, Colorado Springs:** Pikes Peak Regional Airshow. Includes B-25 Mitchell, P-47 Thunderbolt, P-51 Mustang, FM-2 Wildcat, and more. Colorado Springs Airport. www.pprairshow.org

IDAHO • **Aug. 30–31, Nampa:** Warbird Roundup. Features a P-38 Lightning and an F4U-1A Corsair. Guest speaker is aircraft recovery expert Bob Cardin. 9 A.M.–4 P.M. Warhawk Air Museum, 201 Municipal Drive. 208-465-6446. www.warhawkairmuseum.org

IOWA • **Aug. 9–10, Davenport:** Quad City Air Show. Includes AeroShell Aerobatics Team in AT-6G Texan trainers. 8 A.M.–5 P.M. Davenport Municipal Airport. 563-322-7469. www.quadcityairshow.com

KANSAS • **Aug. 9, Abilene:** Vintage baseball game. 1 P.M. Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library, Museum, and Boyhood Home, 200 SE 4th Street. 877-RING-IKE. www.eisenhower.archives.gov

LOUISIANA • **Aug. 8–10, New Orleans:** Heat of Battle VII Wargaming Convention. 9 A.M.–8 P.M. Friday and Saturday, 9 A.M.–4 P.M. Sunday. National WWII Museum, 945 Magazine Street. 504-528-1944. www.nationalww2museum.org

Aug. 9, 16, and 23, New Orleans: Swingin' at the Canteen with the Victory Big Band. Dinner and a show. 6–9 P.M. National WWII Museum, 945 Magazine Street. 504-528-1944. www.nationalww2museum.org

MASSACHUSETTS • **Through Aug. 30, Natick:** 70th Anniversary of D-Day. Exhibit of D-Day–related items from the museum and its archives, including an original Higgins boat. Admission must be scheduled in advance. Museum of World War II. 508-653-1944. www.museumofworldwarii.com

MINNESOTA • **Aug. 23–24, Duluth:** Duluth Air and Aviation Expo 2014. Includes Normandy Tribute, a D-Day air jump reenactment from a C-47 Skytrain. Duluth International Airport. 218-628-9996. www.duluthairshow.com

NEW HAMPSHIRE • **July 27–Sept. 7, Wolfeboro:** Snapshots of D-Day: Photographs of the Normandy Invasion. Exhibit developed by the National WWII Museum in New Orleans. Wright Museum of WWII History, 77 Center Street. 603-569-1212. www.wrightmuseum.org

NEW JERSEY • **Aug. 15–17, West Milford:** Greenwood Lake Air Show. Warbirds, vintage aircraft, modern performers. Greenwood Lake Airport. 973-728-7721. www.greenwoodlakeairshow.com

OHIO • **July 19–20, Willoughby:** Gathering of Eagles XVIII Air Show. Includes WWII warbirds. Lost Nation Airport. 440-759-4148. www.usam.us

Aug. 22–23, Conneaut: D-Day Conneaut. Reenactment of the Normandy Invasion landings of June 6, 1944, on the shore of Lake Erie. Invasion reenactment, living history displays, exhibits, encampment, WWII veterans, ceremonies, parades, USO-style dance, and period vehicles, aircraft, and armor. Conneaut Township Park, 480 Lake Road. www.ddayohio.us

TEXAS • **July 5, Fredericksburg:** Pacific Combat Zone living history reenactments. Programs at 10:30 A.M. and 1 and 3 P.M. Saturday, 10:30 A.M. and 1 P.M. Sunday. National Museum of the Pacific War, 340 East Main Street. 830-997-8600. www.pacificwarmuseum.org

VIRGINIA • **Aug. 9, Bedford:** "Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive." Concert and ceremony in honor of the Greatest Generation. 7–9 P.M. National D-Day Memorial, 3 Overlord Circle. 540-586-3329. www.dday.org

WASHINGTON • **Aug. 1–3, Seattle:** Boeing Seafair Air Show. Includes Grumman F6F Hellcat with warbirds from the private Flying Heritage Collection. Genesee Park/Lake Washington. 206-728-0123. www.seafair.com

Please call the numbers provided or visit websites to check on dates, times, locations, and other information before planning trips.

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A Ground Man Who Wanted Wings

PHOTOS COURTESY OF JOSHUA BELL

Vincent Bell joined the army air forces with hopes of becoming a pilot. That didn't happen, but he did like his ground crew job. He even looks to be enjoying Alaska's weather in the photo here.

VINCENT BELL HAD LOFTY DREAMS. With hopes of learning to fly, the Vermont native enlisted in the US Army Air Forces in October 1942 at the age of 20. He boarded a train for the long ride from Fort Devens, Massachusetts, to Cochran Army Air Field in Macon, Georgia, where he was assigned to the 902nd Basic Flying Training Squadron. Reality, it turned out, needed Bell on the ground, and he was put in training to be an aircraft mechanic.

Though he remained stateside, life on base wasn't without memorable moments. On January 4, 1943, he watched a plane nose over as it taxied down the runway. "The pilot put the brakes on too quick…and the tail went up in the air and stayed there," he wrote to his parents. "The cadet jumped out and raved like hell about it." Sometime after that, two planes from the base collided in midair.

Despite the terrible crash, Bell remained excited as he awaited his first flight. "I got my first ride in an Army plane Sunday afternoon, and it was swell," he wrote to his grandfather. "We were in three plane formation and cruised around for an hour and a half up above the clouds. I sure enjoyed every minute."

When the 902nd departed Macon, Bell was reassigned to the communications detachment of the 58th Fighter Control Squadron, Eleventh Army Air Force, as a radio operator. The squadron was then sent to the Aleutian Islands. Bell still hadn't given up his dream of flying, though, and in March 1944 he applied to be an air cadet. He was turned down.

Bell remained in the Aleutians until October 1945, finishing his service as an engineman with the 11th Fighter Control Squadron. He returned home in November 1945 and never flew again. ★

Submitted by JOSHUA BELL, *grandson of Private First Class Vincent Bell and volunteer oral historian and researcher for the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area. Adapted by* KRISTEN CARMEN, *editorial intern of* America in WWII.

Send your GIs photo and story to editor@americainwwii.com or to: GIs, America in WWII, 4711 Queen Ave., Ste. 202, Harrisburg, PA 17109

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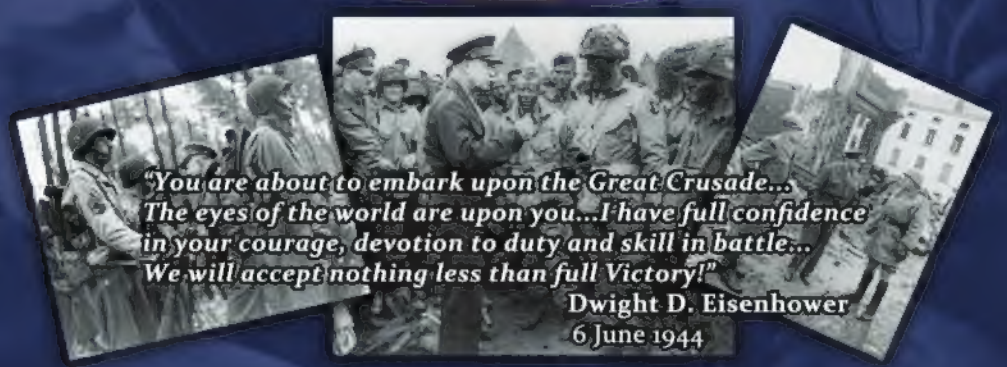
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Dwight D. Eisenhower
6 June 1944

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